

SUPPLEMENTS TO  
VIGILIAE CHRISTIANAE



# Pre-Nicene Christology in Paschal Contexts

The Case of the  
Divine Noetic Anthropos



DRAGOȘ ANDREI GIULEA

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BRILL

## Pre-Nicene Christology in Paschal Contexts

Supplements  
to  
Vigiliae Christianae

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Early Christian Life and Language

*Editors*

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The Case of the Divine Noetic Anthropos

*By*

Dragoş Andrei Giulea



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“We worship Your incorruptible Form!”

*(Coptic Horologion: Service of the Sext on Good Friday)*



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## ABBREVIATIONS

ACW	Ancient Christian Writers
AIPHOS	Annuaire de l'Institut de philologie et d'histoire orientales et slaves
ALGHJ	Arbeiten zur Literatur und Geschichte des hellenistischen Judentums
AnBib	Analecta biblica
ANF	<i>Ante-Nicene Fathers</i>
ANRW	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt: Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der neueren Forschung</i> . Edited by H. Temporini and W. Haase. Berlin, 1972.
Aug	<i>Augustinianum</i>
Bib	<i>Biblica</i>
BZ	<i>Biblische Zeitschrift</i>
CAT	Commentaire de l'Ancien Testament
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CBQMS	Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series
CCSA	Corpus Christianorum Series apocryphorum
CCSL	Corpus Christianorum Series Latina
CH	<i>Church History</i>
CHL	Commentationes Humanarum Litterarum
CNT	Commentaire du Nouveau Testament
ConBOT	Coniectanea biblica: Old Testament Series
ConBNT	Coniectanea neotestamentica or Coniectanea biblica: New Testament Series
CRINT	Compendia rerum iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum
CSEL	Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum latinorum
CTU	<i>The Cuneiform Alphabetic Texts from Ugarit, Ras Ibn Hani, and Other Places</i> . Edited by M. Dietrich, O. Loretz, and J. Sanmartín. Münster, 1995.
CurTM	<i>Currents in Theology and Mission</i>
DB	<i>Dictionnaire de la Bible</i> . Edited by F. Vigouroux. 5 vols. 1895–1912.
DBSup	<i>Dictionnaire de la Bible: Supplément</i> . Edited by L. Pirot and A. Robert. Paris, 1928–
DDD	<i>Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible (DDD)</i> . Edited by Karel van der Toorn, Bob Becking, and Pieter W. van der Horst. Leiden: Brill, 1995.
DJD	Discoveries in the Judean Desert
DSD	Dead Sea Discoveries
EJL	Early Judaism and Its Literature
EphLit	<i>Ephemerides liturgicae</i>
ErJb	<i>Eranos-Jahrbuch</i>
ETL	<i>Ephemerides theologicae lovanienses</i>
EvQ	<i>Evangelical Quarterly</i>
ExpTim	<i>Expository Times</i>
FC	Fathers of the Church



- FRLANT Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments  
 FV *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker: griechisch und deutsch*. Eds. Hermann Diels and Walther Kranz. Zürich; Berlin: Weidmann, 1964.
- GCS Die griechische christliche Schriftsteller der ersten [drei] Jahrhunderte  
*Gnomon*
- GNO *Gregorii Nysseni Opera*. Edited by Werner Jaeger et al. Leiden: Brill, 1952–.
- GOTR *Greek Orthodox Theological Review*
- HS *Hebrew Studies*
- HTR *Harvard Theological Review*
- HUCA *Hebrew Union College Annual*
- ITQ *Irish Theological Quarterly*
- Jastrow Jastrow. M., *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature*. New York: Pardes Publishing House, 1950.
- JBL *Journal of Biblical Literature*
- JECS *Journal of Early Christian Studies*
- JETS *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*
- JJS *Journal of Jewish Studies*
- JQR *Jewish Quarterly Review*
- JR *Journal of Religion*
- JRelS *Journal of Religious Studies*
- JSJ *Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic and Roman Period*
- JSNT *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*
- JSNTSup *Journal for the Study of the New Testament. Supplement Series*
- JTOTSS *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament. Supplement Series*
- JSP *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha*
- JSPSS *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha. Supplement Series*
- JSQ *Jewish Studies Quarterly*
- JTS *Journal of Theological Studies*
- KTU *Die keilalphabetischen Texte aus Ugarit*. Edited by M. Dietrich, O. Loretz, and J. Sanmartín. AOAT 24/1. Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1976. 2d enlarged ed. of *KTU: The Cuneiform Alphanumeric Texts from Ugarit, Ras Ibn Hani, and Other Places*. Edited by M. Dietrich, O. Loretz, and J. Sanmartín. Münster, 1995 (= CTU).
- LCL Loeb Classical Library
- LEC Library of Early Christianity
- LMD *La Maison-Dieu*
- ModTh *Modern Theology*
- NHS Nag Hammadi Studies
- NHMS Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies
- NovT *Novum Testamentum*
- NPNF 1 Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Series 1
- NPNF 2 Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Series 2
- NTF Neutestamentliche Forschungen
- NTS *New Testament Studies*
- OBO Orbis biblicus et orientalis

ÖBS	Österreichische biblische Studien
OCA	Orientalia christiana analecta
OCP	<i>Orientalia christiana periodica</i>
Or	<i>Orientalia</i>
OS	<i>L'Orient Syrien</i>
OTP	<i>The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha</i> . 2 vols. Edited by James H. Charlesworth. New York: Doubleday, 1985.
OtSt	Oudtestamentische Studiën
PG	Patrologia graeca [= Patrologiae cursus completus: Series graeca]. Edited by J.-P. Migne. 162 vols. Paris, 1857–1886.
PO	Patrologia orientalis
<i>ProEccl</i>	<i>Pro ecclesia</i>
<i>Proof</i>	<i>Prooftexts: A Journal of Jewish Literary History</i>
<i>PRSt</i>	<i>Perspectives in Religious Studies</i>
PVTG	Pseudepigrapha Veteris Testamenti Graece
RAM	<i>Revue d'ascétique et de mystique</i>
<i>Rel</i>	<i>Religion</i>
<i>RevBib</i>	<i>Revue biblique</i>
<i>RevLit</i>	<i>Revista liturgica</i>
<i>RevQ</i>	<i>Revue de Qumrân</i>
<i>RevScRel</i>	<i>Revue des sciences religieuses</i>
<i>RHE</i>	<i>Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique</i>
<i>RSLR</i>	<i>Rivista di storia e letteratura religiosa</i>
<i>RSR</i>	<i>Recherches de science religieuse</i>
<i>RTAM</i>	<i>Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale</i>
<i>RThom</i>	<i>Revue thomiste</i>
SBA	Stuttgarter biblische Aufsatzbände
SBEC	Studies in the Bible and Early Christianity
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLEJL	Society of Biblical Literature Early Judaism and Its Literature
SBLSP	Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers
SBLSS	Society of Biblical Literature Symposium Series
SBT	Studies in Biblical Theology
SC	Sources chrétiennes
<i>ScEs</i>	<i>Science et esprit</i>
SCS	Septuagint and Cognate Studies Series
SD	Studies and Documents
SJ	Studia Judaica
<i>SJT</i>	<i>Scottish Journal of Theology</i>
SJSJ	Supplements to the Journal of the Study of Judaism
<i>SLJT</i>	<i>St. Luke's Journal of Theology</i>
SNT	Supplements to Novum Testamentum
<i>StPatr</i>	<i>Studia patristica</i>
STDJ	Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah
<i>StudMon</i>	<i>Studia monastica</i>
STVP	Studia in Veteris Testamenti pseudepigrapha
SVTQ	<i>Saint Vladimir's Theological Quarterly</i>

<i>TDNT</i>	<i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i> . Edited by G. Kittel and G. Friedrich. Tr. G.W. Bromiley. 10 vols. Grand Rapids, 1964–1976.
<i>TDOT</i>	<i>Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament</i> . Edited by G.J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren. Translated by J.T. Willis, G.W. Bromiley, and D.E. Green. 15 vols. Grand Rapids, 1974.
<i>Theof</i>	<i>Theoforum</i>
ThH	Théologie historique
TP	<i>Theologie und Philosophie</i>
TRev	<i>Theologische Revue</i>
TS	<i>Theological Studies</i>
TSAJ	Texte und Studien zum antiken Judentum
<i>TynBul</i>	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>
<i>TWNT</i>	<i>Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament</i> . Edited by G. Kittel and G. Friedrich. Stuttgart, 1932–1979.
TZ	<i>Theologische Zeitschrift</i>
UF	<i>Ugarit-Forschungen</i>
VC	<i>Vigiliae Christianae</i>
<i>VetChr</i>	<i>Vetera Christianorum</i>
VT	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
VTSup	Supplements to <i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
ZAC	<i>Zeitschrift für Antikes Christentum</i>
ZAW	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
ZKT	<i>Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie</i>
ZNW	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche</i>

## INTRODUCTION: THEORETICAL AIMS AND METHODS

### 1. PASCHA AND DIVINE ANTHROPOS: THE QUEST FOR ROOTS AND MEANINGS

More ancient than the two millennia of Christian and Jewish rabbinic existence, the origins of Pascha remain intertwined—to the modern inquirer—with the mysterious origins of Israel. The main feast of ancient Judaism and Christianity, the Pesach or Pascha, undoubtedly preserves a main role, sometimes even the central one, in modern Jewish and Christian liturgical life. Such a remarkable persistence raises a question concerning the nature of the hypnotic lure which the paschal words and ritual gestures enliven within the human spirit. Venturing an answer, one may suppose that paschal words and rituals suggest, or at least glimpse the fuzzy shape of, a solution to that primary concern, the *Angst* which has mesmerized the most illustrious philosophical and theological minds from Plato to Basil of Caesarea to Kierkegaard to Heidegger, namely, the fear of death. Advancing a solution which is not mere theoretical answer but intricate ritual practice—a convoluted amalgam of gestures, words, images, music, and theology—the feast rather invites to a mystical experience and a salvific relationship with the divinity of light which shattered Hades and evil, therefore to a theophany of a victorious Messiah.

Modern scholarship has shown a great interest in the ancient texts on Passover and Pascha and generated an impressive amount of literature disclosing a most varied palette of approaches. Paschal theology, however, has never been inquired from the perspective of the Divine Image, the biblical concept which inspired in antiquity endless speculations on God's anthropomorphic or non-anthropomorphic nature, including the Second Temple traditions about Adam and the Divine Anthropos. This is due not to scholarly disinterest but to the very recent expansion of research in the visionary and apocalyptic traditions of the Second Temple. The evolution of this research follows the outburst of academic inquiry in pseudepigraphic texts and the newly discovered manuscripts from Qumran and Nag Hammadi. Since contemporary scholarship has already mapped out such Second Temple traditions as *kabod* ("glory"), heavenly liturgies, Adam, Moses, Enoch, Abraham, Jacob, and others, the student of paschal theology now enjoys the rare occasion of being able to appropriate these new insights

for his or her own field. And there are, definitely, most urgent questions occasioned by this new intellectual setting. What is, for instance, the connection between the paschal tradition and the theophanic theology of the Second Temple? Which of the trends of the Second Temple is most akin to, nurtured and developed by, the paschal tradition? Could these theophanic languages of the Bible and Second Temple shed a new light on the main character of paschal narrative, Jesus Christ? Apparently, from the large variety of theophanic glossary employed in the Second Temple—from “fire” to “clouds,” “pillars of glory,” “angels,” and “human forms”—paschal discourse favours the anthropomorphic and luminous images and phrases to portray Jesus. Following this line of thought, my study supports the idea that the ancient *kabod* tradition, embracing terminologies like “Adam,” “image,” “likeness,” and “form,” represents a key intellectual matrix for the early Christian theorization on Pascha. Briefly expressed, Pascha was a *kabod* and an Adamic/Adam-driven tradition.

As such, I perceive the *kabod* and Adam-driven traditions as two close but distinct entities. Several scholars have demonstrated that *kabod* terminologies, although connected with anthropomorphic representations of God in certain documents, denote a mere luminous divine presence, yet not necessarily anthropomorphic in others. Moshe Weinfeld, for instance, shows that the word *kabod* covers a large semantic area of meanings such as “heaviness,” “gravity,” “importance,” “honour,” “respect,” “substance,” “quantity,” “power,” “dignity,” and “glory;” and in the last meaning takes the form of a consuming fire surrounded by a cloud (e.g., Exod 16:10; 24:16; 33:11; Num 12:8; 16:42; 17:7; Deut 34:10).<sup>1</sup> Weinfeld equally asserts, “in the ancient Near East the divine glory was embodied in the crown of the deity or hero.”<sup>2</sup> Additionally to the gods, there are various other objects, such as holy thrones, temples, garments, which may be adorned with the divine *kabod*.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See Weinfeld, “כבוד, *kabod*,” *TDOT* 7:23–38. For a detailed analysis of the *kabod/doxa* tradition from the pre-monarchic settlements to the various forms it takes at the end of the Second Temple in Jerusalem, including Pauline theology, see Carey C. Newman, *Paul's Glory-Christology: Tradition and Rhetoric* (Leiden: Brill, 1992). See also Wilhelm Caspari, *Studien zur Lehre von der Herrlichkeit Gottes im AT* (Leipzig: Gressner & Schramm, 1907); Idem, *Die Bedeutung der Wortsippe k-b-d im Hebräischen* (Leipzig: A. Deichert, 1908); Johannes Schneider, *Δόξα: Eine bedeutungsgeschichtliche Studie*, NTF 3 (Güterloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1932); Bernhard Stein, *Der Begriff Kebed Jahweh und seine Bedeutung für die alttestamentliche Gotteserkenntnis* (Westphalia: Heinrich and J. Liechte, 1939). For an extensive bibliography on the *kabod* tradition, see Newman, *Paul's*.

<sup>2</sup> Weinfeld, “כבוד, *kabod*,” 27.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

Another scholar, Walter Eichrodt, distinguishes among five lines of evolution of the *kabod* tradition. The first position envisions the glory as a “striking radiance” proceeding from Yahweh (Exod 24:16 and Deut 15:22), while the “prophetic” version regards it as a divine and transcendent majesty of Yahweh (Exod 33:18 and Isa 6:4). Additionally, the “priestly” position conceives of the *kabod* as the “form in which God appears for the purpose of revelation” (e.g., 1 Kgs 8:10, 2 Chr 7:1, and Ezek 1:28).<sup>4</sup> Later, Judaism developed two new understandings which either merged the priestly position into the prophetic line (with the result of such figures as the Son of Man or the Messiah), or simply reshaped the priestly version into a theology of the *shekina*.<sup>5</sup> I also regard the Adam-driven traditions in their most ancient representations, starting for instance with Genesis 1–2, as distinct from the *kabod* lore. Nevertheless, numerous documents of late Second Temple, as we will see in this study, employ exalted titles to describe the figure of Adam, and depict him in the glorious lines of a divine being. From that time on, the *kabod* and Adamic traditions become strongly interconnected and almost indistinguishable.

Consequently, rather than exploring paschal writings and their Christology through the traditional image of the “lamb,” my study will investigate them through the ideas of the Divine Image and Heavenly Adam or Anthropos. My work will first emphasize such divine titles and images of early paschal Christology as “Glory,” “Image (*eikon*),” “Heavenly Priest,” “Demurge,” and “Divine Warrior.” Since divine titles such as these generally denote the *modi operandi* of a certain divine character, my research will expound the soteriological doctrines fashioned through the lens of such terms. Furthermore, I intend to highlight a special paschal vision on salvation which I called “image soteriology” or “*eikonic* soteriology.”<sup>6</sup>

The celestial Image, as a Divine Warrior, while discovering its earthly *eikon* enslaved by Death, initiates a military campaign carried out with the

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<sup>4</sup> Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament*, trans. J.A. Baker (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster, 1975), 2:30–32, at 32.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 34.

<sup>6</sup> See Dragoş A. Giulea, “Eikonic Soteriology from Paul to Augustine: A Forgotten Tradition?” *Theof.* 42, no. 1 (2011): 47–70, where I traced the presence of this most likely Pauline doctrine in Irenaeus, Origen, Athanasius, Ephrem, the Cappadocians, and Augustine. I preferred to spell “*eikonic*” instead of “iconic,” in order to underline the fact that the whole discussion is not about the representation of the divine—e.g., in paintings, sculptures, statues, etc.—about what idolatry means and the permission or interdiction to have representations of the divine. To the contrary, my analysis will gravitate around the nature and functions of the Divine Image (*eikon*) and of its copy, the human being.

weapons of humility. Undeniably, this is a new version of the ancestral myth of the divine combat. Christ, as Divine Image, assumes the form of the slave—that of the human being enslaved by Death—and a life whose ending is the passion and death. But the assumption of death leads to the victory over human's archenemy and the liberation of the forefather Adam. Moreover, Adam regains his lost prelapsarian image replete with glory. When the text emphasises the demiurgic function of the Divine Image, *eikonic* soteriology becomes the eschatological moment when Christ re-activates his creative powers and re-fashions the human being according to his Icon.

This study continues with an inspection of early paschal hermeneutics and epistemology, where two particular theories need to be addressed. First, typology, in paschal interpretation, represents a method of discovering divine mysteries encrypted in the sacred code of the Bible. Additionally, since the divine *kabod* (identified in these writings with Jesus Christ) descended to earth, ascension will become a useless epistemic tool of accessing the divine realm. Instead, paschal writings will talk about noetic or mystery vision, a special cognitive capacity able to discern here, on earth, the divine glory which is already present in the universe.

Finally, this study will explore one of the most enthralling aspects of paschal Christology, which regards the nature of the Divine Image, Adam, or Anthropos figure. Like several other Hellenistic and hellenizing documents of Late Antiquity, paschal texts envision the Divine Image as a noetic entity while equating it with Jesus Christ. This point may also constitute a step forward in apocalyptic studies. While the most sacred object of apocalyptic literature is the anthropomorphic figure, and famous visionaries such as Daniel, Enoch, Abraham, Moses, and Isaiah frequently yearn to contemplate, Hellenistic authors like Philo, Justin, Irenaeus, Clement, Pseudo-Hippolytus, Origen, and others transferred it to a noetic level. I have already called this late antique phenomenon the “noetic turn,” and I have argued that it involved a momentous shift from apocalyptic to noetic ontologies and epistemologies.<sup>7</sup> To this effect, my present investigation of the anthropomorphic figure can be regarded as a study case of this “noetic turn,” which involves a larger thematic inventory.

Thus, in its nature, the Divine Anthropos is not an object among the material objects of the universe, but he belongs to the noetic and invisible realm. Without being a mere process *within* the mind, or a phantasm of

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<sup>7</sup> See Dragoş A. Giulea, “The Noetic Turn in Jewish Thought,” *JSJ* 42, no. 1 (2011): 23–57.

reason, the noetic world represents an invisible but still *real* domain of existence; the hidden side of creation. Furthermore, this ontology requires a new epistemological perspective: the vision of God and angels is no longer one perceived with the physical eye, but with the intellect or mind in a noetic apprehension.

The noetic Anthropos seems to have a form, and he is usually a second divine figure *after* God the Father. This divine figure is also frequently referred as the Image of God. Hellenistic texts, however, rarely conceive of this form as a human shape. Incidentally, my study may also shed a new light into the complicated anthropomorphic controversy. While the anti-anthropomorphic trend generally starts with Xenophanes of Colophon, it can also be encountered in the Jewish Hellenistic milieu of Aristobulus and Philo as well as the Christian contexts of Clement and Origen. These classics of Jewish and Christian literature, in spite of the fact that they preserve an impressive amount of anthropomorphic imagery and terminology, usually understand this imagery and terminology allegorically. Nonetheless, these authors also mention in their writings a certain form of God, and sometimes develop a doctrine of a cosmic, divine form. This form, however, belongs to the deeper level of reality; to the noetic and intelligible dimension of existence.

Furthermore, we will see that mystery terminology can be connected with the noetic turn, since the distinction between noetic and aisthetic is roughly coextensive with the distinction between hidden and manifested. We will see this identity already at work in Philo and the *Hermetic Corpus*. But in the framework of the new turn the ancient ontology of biblical and apocalyptic celestial kingdom becomes noetic, mysterious, and transferred from the realm of physical visibility and manifestation to the realm of mystery and intellectual perception. Thus, pointing out the connection between the mystery dimension and the noetic turn will be another key purpose of my study. Regarding paschal writings, mystery terminology is one of their steady occurrences. The earliest paschal authors of the second and third centuries, Melito, Origen, and Pseudo-Hippolytus, will translate the biblical and apocalyptic ontologies of the divine—usually expressed through aisthetic language—to the mystery-noetic dimension. The writers of the subsequent centuries will follow them. The idea of noetic Divine Anthropos, present in several of these homilies, is contemporary with, and part of, this turn from aisthetic to noetic ontology and epistemology.



## 2. THE EARLIEST PASCHAL DOCUMENTS AND THEIR CONTEXT

Melito's *Peri Pascha*, Pseudo-Hippolytus's *In sanctum Pascha*, and Origen's *Peri Pascha*, all of which were discovered in the first half of the twentieth century, serve as the three primary documents investigated in this study. They certainly represent the most ancient paschal texts and preserve an abundant amount of Jewish-Christian traditions unfiltered through the lens of the Church councils or such Christian debates as the Arian, the anthropomorphic, and the pneumatologic one.<sup>8</sup> The modern saga of these texts begins in 1932, when Frederic G. Kenyon publishes an article in which he presents a fifth century codex, partly preserved in the Chester Beatty collection and the remainder in the library of the University of Michigan.<sup>9</sup> Four years later, Campbell Bonner identifies the text of the codex with Melito's *Peri Pascha*. Bonner's discovery will help other scholars to further recognize the text (either its fragments or *in toto*) in several Greek, Coptic, Syriac, Latin, and Georgian collections.<sup>10</sup> This series of discoveries will also entail a series of improved critical editions carried out by Bernhard Lohse (1958), Othmar Perler (1969), and Stuart G. Hall (1979).<sup>11</sup>

Despite these discoveries and later critical analyses, it remains difficult to establish a date of authorship with great precision. Nevertheless, sometime between 169 and 177 CE, Melito, bishop of Sardis, was the petitioner of an apology to the emperor Marcus Aurelius on behalf of his fellow Christians. Although the apology has been lost, this event helps modern scholars to locate the activity of the Sardisian in the latter half of the second century.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> See Raniero Cantalamessa, *I più antichi testi pasquali della Chiesa. Le omelie di Melitone di Sardi e dell'Anonimo Quartodecimano e altri testi de II secolo. Introduzione, traduzione e commentario* (Rome: Edizioni Liturgiche, 1972). See also Claudio Moreschini and Enrico Norelli, *Histoire de la littérature chrétienne antique grecque et latine*, vol. 1, *De Paul à l'ère de Constantin* (Genève: Labor et fides, 2000), 170–176, 319–354.

<sup>9</sup> Kenyon, "The Chester Beatty Biblical Papyri," *Gn* 8 (1932): 46–49.

<sup>10</sup> Bonner, "The Homily on the Passion by Melito Bishop of Sardis," in *Mélanges F. Cumont*, *AIPHOS* 4 (Brussels, 1936), 107–119. See also Hall, *Melito of Sardis: On Pascha and Fragments* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), xlv–xlvii, for a list of the extant manuscripts.

<sup>11</sup> See *Die Passa-Homilie des Bischofs Meliton von Sardes*, ed. Bernhard Lohse (Leiden: Brill, 1958); Meliton de Sardes, *Sur la Pâque et fragments*, ed. and trans. Othmar Perler, SC 123 (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1966); *Melito of Sardis: On Pascha and Fragments*, ed. and trans. Stuart G. Hall (Oxford Early Christian Texts; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979). In the present research I will make use of this last version of the text.

<sup>12</sup> Hall, introduction to *Melito of Sardis*, xii and xv.

Regarding the second author, the name “Pseudo-Hippolytus” represents a sheer scholarly label denoting an anonymous writer who most likely lived in the same Asia Minor province as Melito in a time period not much later than the Sardisian. The text of *In sanctum Pascha* is preserved in eight manuscripts found in Greece and ascribed to John Chrysostom. Besides these, the palimpsest from Grottaferrata, the fragments from the Syrian *Florilegium Edessenum Anonymum*, and the *florilegium* added to the acts of a Lateran council ascribe the homily to Hippolytus of Rome.<sup>13</sup>

Dating Pseudo-Hippolytus’s text is problematic, as modern scholars became suspicious of these paternities and proposed a few substitute hypotheses.<sup>14</sup> One of the most significant suggestions came from Raniero Cantalamessa, who placed the homily in second-century Asia Minor and defended this position especially on internal theological and linguistic grounds; namely, that Pseudo-Hippolytus’s oration shares similar elements with Melito’s *Peri Pascha* as well as several other theological ideas typical of the second century.<sup>15</sup> Yet, others—for example, Gribomont, Stuber, and

<sup>13</sup> See Moreschini and Norelli, *Histoire de la littérature*, 175.

<sup>14</sup> Since the first edition of the Chrysostomian *opera omnia* (H. Savile, V [Eton 1612], 930–940), the homily has been reckoned among John Chrysostom’s *spuria*. The next two important editions—ed. Maurini with B. de Montfaucon’s corrections (VIII, Paris 1728, 264–275) and ed. Migne (PG 59, 735–746)—also classified the text in the same category. For the new hypotheses, see Charles Martin “Un Περὶ τοῦ Πάσχα de S. Hippolyte retrouvé?” *RSR* 16 (1922): 148–165, where the author presupposes that the homily might be the lost Hippolytan *On Pascha*. R.H. Connolly, in “New Attributions to Hippolytus,” *JTS* 46 (1945): 192–200, and Alois Grillmeier—in “Der Gottessohn im Totenreich. Soteriologische und christologische Motivierung der Descensuslehre in der älteren christlichen Überlieferung,” *ZKT* 71 (1949): 1–53; 184–203—doubted that Hippolytus of Rome wrote the text. Taking over this idea, Pierre Nautin, in his critical edition of the *Homélies Paschales*, viewed the document as a fourth-century text inspired by Hippolytus’s treatise *Peri Pascha*. While Christine Mohrmann deemed that the homily had been written in the fifth century—see “Note sur l’homélie paschal VI de la collection Pseudo-Chrysostomienne dite «des petites trompettes»,” in *Mélanges en l’honneur de Monseigneur Michel Andrieu* (Strasbourg: Palais Universitaire, 1956), 351–360—Marcel Richard argued that this material issued from Monarchian sources: “Une homélie monarchienne sur la Pâque,” *StPatr* 78 (1961): 284. For the present study, I will follow Giuseppe Visonà’s critical edition from his *Pseudo Ippolito, In sanctum Pascha: Studio, edizione, commento* (Milan: Vita e pensiero, 1988). For the English translation, I will use Adalbert Hamman, ed., *The Paschal Mystery: Ancient Liturgies and Patristic Texts*, trans. Thomas Halton (State Island, NY: Alba House, 1969).

<sup>15</sup> Cantalamessa, *L’Omelia “In S. Pascha” dello Pseudo-Ippolito di Roma. Ricerche sulla teologia dell’Asia Minore nella seconda metà del II secolo* (Milan: Vita e pensiero, 1967), 187–368. Campbell Bonner, in his *The Homily on the Passion by Melito Bishop of Sardis*, SD 12 (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1940), was the first to notice certain elements of similarity between the anonymous *In sanctum Pascha* and Melito’s *Peri Pascha*.

Visonà—suggested a more cautious approach in dating the homily, preferring to leave open the possibility of Nautin's proposition: that is, during the early fourth century.<sup>16</sup> Nonetheless, a large majority of scholars generally agreed with Cantalamessa's dating of the homily: Daniélou, Grillmeier, Botte, Simonetti, Hall, and Richardson embraced his position. Similarly, Kretschmar understood the homily as better placed at the beginning of the third century.<sup>17</sup> Others—Blanchetière, Mara, and Mazza—used the homily as a second-century document in order to prove their theses about Ignatius of Antioch, Melito, the *Gospel of Peter*, or Hippolytus of Rome.<sup>18</sup> Finally, for Gerlach, *In sanctum Pascha* should be associated with the paschal traditions of Asia Minor during the third century.<sup>19</sup> In addition, Leonhard defends a

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<sup>16</sup> See two reviews of Cantalamessa's position by Jean Gribomont, *RSLR* 5 (1969): 158–163 and Alfred Stuiber, *TRev* 66 (1970): 398; cf. Visonà, *Pseudo Ippolito*, 35–36. Since the homily seems to have been used as a liturgical text, as Visonà argues, historical-critical methods may be applied to the text, and, thus, it may be affirmed that the rhetorical embellishments of the text might belong to a later period and come from the hands of a series of editors. In a series of articles—e.g., “Pseudo-Ippolito In s. Pascha: note di storia e di critica del testo,” *Aevum* 59 (1985): 107–123; “Pseudo-Ippolito In s. Pascha 53 e la tradizione dell'enkrateia,” *Cristianesimo nella storia* 6 (1985): 445–488; “L'interpretazione sacramentale di Io. 19,34 nello Pseudo-Ippolito In s. Pascha 53,” *RSLR* 21 (1985)—and also in his monograph *Pseudo Ippolito*, Visonà offers several examples of theological terms and themes Pseudo-Hippolytus shares with a large plethora of authors from the second to the fifth centuries. Dating *In s. Pascha* faces many difficulties, indeed. However, a *datazione alta* might be suggested on the basis of certain Pseudo-Hippolytan positions, of which the last two would have hardly occurred in a paschal homily of post-Origenian era. Thus, we can count the Melitanean double structure and method of articulating the discourse, his mystery exegesis and anthropomorphic tendency as well as his proneness to binitarianism. Especially the exegetical method applied to Exodus 12 with a quite careful usage of early Christian imagery cannot be compared with the rhetorically elaborated Cappadocian homilies or the highly metaphorical homilies of the fifth and sixth centuries which, in view of a parallel with styles in architecture, represent a cluster of Baroque pieces compared to a Romanesque artifact. See especially Hesychius of Jerusalem, Basil of Seleucia, John of Beryth, Leontius of Byzantium in SC 187. I would place, therefore, Pseudo-Hippolytus in the second or third century CE.

<sup>17</sup> See the following reviews by Bernard Botte, *RTAM* 33 (1968): 184; Jean Daniélou, *RSR* 57 (1969): 79–84; Alois Grillmeier, *TP* 44 (1969): 128–130; Manlio Simonetti, *VetChr* 6 (1969): 218–220; Stuart G. Hall, *JTS* 20 (1969): 301–304; and articles by Georg Kretschmar, “Christliches Passa im 2. Jahrhundert und die Ausbildung der christlichen Theologie,” *RSR* 60 (1972): 287–323, 306–307; Cyril C. Richardson, “A New Solution to the Quartodeciman and the Synoptic Chronology,” *JTS* 24 (1973): 74–85, 77.

<sup>18</sup> François Blanchetière, *Le christianisme asiatique aux IIe et IIIe siècles* (Lille 1981), 185; Maria G. Mara, *Évangile de Pierre*, SC 201 (Paris: Cerf, 1973), 215; Enrico Mazza, “Omellerie pasquali e birkat ha-mazon: fonti dell'anafora di Ippolito?” *Eph. Lit.* 97 (1983): 409–481.

<sup>19</sup> Karl Gerlach, *The Antenicene Pascha: A Rhetorical History* (Leuven: Peeters, 1998), 161, 387, and 403.

similar date.<sup>20</sup> These scholars emphasize various common elements which *In sanctum Pascha* shares with several writings of the first three centuries such as the Melitonean mystery language, various theological expressions, an early Christology, and a binitarian theology. They also point out similarities with the liturgical tradition and the *testimonia* used in the scriptural exegesis of the first three centuries.

The third document, the Origenian paschal treatise, was discovered in 1941 in an Egyptian cave at Tura, very close to the ruins of Saint Arsenius's monastery. In 1979, Guéraud and Nautin were able to reconstruct the text to its almost complete form.<sup>21</sup> Since then, scholars have identified new fragments of the text, highlighted by Bernd Witte's 1993 new critical edition.<sup>22</sup> According to Nautin, Origen wrote *Peri Pascha* in the same third century somewhere between 235 and 248.<sup>23</sup>

My study will engage a few times some documents connected with the early paschal homilies, the early tractates on resurrection ascribed to Athénagoras, Tertullian, or Methodius, especially in what regards their christological views. As a genre, the tractates share some common topics with paschal homilies, for instance, Jesus' resurrection and the resurrection of the human being, the nature of the resurrected human being and its body. However, the tractates are different in terms of content (the central theme is the resurrection, not the meaning of the paschal feast and its particular narrative) and discursive form (they include more logical or even philosophical arguments, not exegetical exercises on Exodus 12 and the paschal liturgy). Thus, they have a minor connection with the whole theology of the Pascha as a feast. Unlike them, Melito's *Peri Pascha* begins with the affirmation that Exodus 12 was read on the paschal night, while the homily consists in a commentary to this text. Likewise, the other two writings ascribed to

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<sup>20</sup> Hansjörg auf der Maur et al., *Die Osterfeier in der alten Kirche* (Münster: Lit Verlag, 2003).

<sup>21</sup> See Octave Guéraud and Pierre Nautin, *Origène, Sur la Pâque: Traité inédit publié d'après un papyrus de Toura* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1979). See also Guéraud's "Note préliminaire sur les papyrus d'Origène retrouvés à Toura," *RHR* 131 (1946): 85–108. For the English translation, see *Origen: Treatise on the Passover and Dialogue of Origen with Heraclides and His Fellow Bishops on the Father, the Son, and the Soul*, ed. and trans. Robert J. Daly, ACW 54 (New York: Paulist Press, 1992).

<sup>22</sup> Witte, *Die Schrift des Origenes „Über das Passa“* (Altenberge: Oros Verlag, 1993). In the present study I will make use of this critical edition.

<sup>23</sup> Guéraud and Nautin, *Origène*, 109. Scholars are also aware of the existence of three other paschal orations pertaining to the same period, with very few fragments preserved; namely, by Apollinaris of Hierapolis, Clement of Alexandria, and Hippolytus of Rome; cf. Guéraud and Nautin, *Origène*, 98–100.

Pseudo-Hippolytus and Origen also serve as commentaries of Exodus 12 and attempt to offer the Christian meaning of the feast.<sup>24</sup> Moreover, the cluster of interconnected themes to be studied in my work—the Divine Anthropos, Christ as Divine Image, *eikonic* soteriology, Christ as Glory, glory soteriology, and typology as revealing divine mysteries—are almost non-existent in the tractates, with the exception of *eikonic* Christology and soteriology present in Tertullian and Methodius, which I will mention at the appropriate time.

### 3. THE PRESENT STATUS OF THE PROBLEM

Modern scholars have undertaken a tremendous effort in investigating the liturgical aspects of the Jewish Passover and the Christian Pascha, the stylistic and rhetorical formulas encompassed in paschal discourses, and the theology elaborated within both liturgical and theological Pesach/paschal texts. To this effect, Segal, Haag, Haran, and Leonhard are mentioned for their contribution to the history of Passover and Pascha, while Casel, Huber, Strobel, and auf der Maur for their contribution regarding the early Christian paschal theology and celebration.<sup>25</sup>

Others, such as Bradshaw, Hoffman, and Johnson, have offered detailed observations regarding the preparations for the Great Sabbath, the Lenten, and the Paschal feast.<sup>26</sup> Simultaneously, they address the connections

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<sup>24</sup> We will see that, in essence, Exodus 12 is the report of a theophany, the manifestation of a salvific divine message. The episode relates how Yahweh comes to Moses and Aaron and offers them the mysterious details of several acts intended to save the people of Israel from the plague and Egyptian slavery.

<sup>25</sup> For the Passover, see for example J.B. Segal, *The Hebrew Passover from the Earliest Times to AD 70* (Oxford: University Press, 1963); Roger Le Déaut, *La Nuit pascale: Essai sur la signification de la Pâque juive à partir du Targum d'Exode XII 42, AnBib 22* (Rome: Institut biblique pontifical, 1963); Herbert Haag, *Vom alten zum neuen Pascha: Geschichte und Theologie des Osterfestes* (Stuttgart: KBW Verlag, 1971); Menahem Haran, "The Passover Sacrifice," in *Studies in the Religion of Ancient Israel, SVT 23* (Leiden: Brill, 1972), 86–116; Clemens Leonhard, *The Jewish Pesach and the Origins of the Christian Easter: Open Questions in Current Research, SJ 35* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2006). For the early Pascha, see also Christine Mohrmann, "Pascha, Passio, Transitus," *EphLit* 66 (1952): 37–52; Odo Casel, *La fête de Pâques dans l'Église des Pères*, trans. J.C. Didier (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1963); Bernard Botte, "Pascha," *OS* 8 (1963): 213–226; Wolfgang Huber, *Passa und Ostern: Untersuchungen zur Osterfeier d. alten Kirche* (Berlin: Töpelmann, 1969); August Strobel, *Ursprung und Geschichte des frühchristlichen Osterkalenders* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1977); Hansjörg auf der Maur, *Die Osterfeier in der alten Kirche* (Münster: Lit, 2003).

<sup>26</sup> See Paul F. Bradshaw and Lawrence A. Hoffman, "Passover and Easter: The Symbolic Shaping of Time and Meaning," in *Passover and Easter: The Symbolic Structuring of Sacred*

between the Passover and the Shavuot (the Jewish festivals celebrating the liberation from the Egyptian slavery and the presentation of the Torah at Mount Sinai). Within the Christian context, Bradshaw, Hoffman, and Johnson specified the links between the Pascha and the Pentecost, together with the meanings enclosed in their profound symbolism.

Liturgical specialists, as well, have offered momentous insights concerning the meanings of the Pesach and Pascha ritual dimensions, adding significant observations as regards the relationship between the ideas of exodus, salvation, and eschatology encompassed within paschal theology.<sup>27</sup>

Finally, other scholars have noticed various links between the Pascha and the Gospels (Swain) as well as the Book of Revelation (Shepherd and Prigent), *1 Peter* (Cross), and the *Epistle of Barnabas* (Bernard).<sup>28</sup> Consequently, it is worth noting for our study that Shepherd and Prigent have already made manifest the deep connection between the Pascha and early Christian apocalypticism. Several other scholars have produced comparative analyses of the Passover and the Pascha together with research on the typological exegesis, the Quartodeciman debate, and other topics including

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*Seasons* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1999), 1–14; Lawrence A. Hoffman “The Great Sabbath and Lent: Jewish Origins?” in Bradshaw, *Passover and Easter*, 15–35; Maxwell E. Johnson, “Preparation for Pascha? Lent in Christian Antiquity” in Bradshaw, *Passover and Easter*, 36–54; Lawrence A. Hoffman and Maxwell E. Johnson, “Lent in Perspective: A Summary Dialogue,” in Bradshaw, *Passover and Easter*, 55–70; Paul F. Bradshaw, “The Origins of Easter,” in *Between Memory and Hope: Readings on the Liturgical Year*, ed. Maxwell E. Johnson (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2000), 111–124; Patrick Regan, “The Three Days and the Forty Days,” in Johnson, *Between Memory*, 125–142, 223–246.

<sup>27</sup> F. Dell’Oro, “La solenne veglia pasquale,” *Rev. Lit.* 40 (1953): 1–93; Bernard Botte, “La question pascale: Pâque du vendredi ou Pâque du dimanche?” *LMD* 41 (1955): 84–95; Pierre Journel, “La liturgie du Mystère pascal: La nuit pascale,” *LMD* 67 (1961): 123–144; idem, “The Easter Cycle,” in *The Church at Prayer*, vol. 4, *The Liturgy and Time*, eds. Aimé G. Martimort et al.; trans. Matthew J. O’Connell (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1986), 33–76; D.B. Capelle, “La procession du Lumen Christi au samedi soir,” in *Travaux liturgiques* 3 (Louvain: Mont César, 1967), 221–235; Gabriel Betonière, *The Historical Development of the Easter Vigil and Related Services in the Greek Church*, OCA 193 (Rome: Pontificio Instituto Orientale, 1972); Thomas J. Talley, “History and Eschatology in the Primitive Pascha,” *Worship* 47:4 (1973): 212–221; idem, *The Origins of the Liturgical Year* (New York: Pueblo Pub. Co., 1986); Robert F. Taft, “Holy Week in the Byzantine Tradition,” in Johnson, *Between Memory and Hope*, 155–182; Klemens Richter, *The Meaning of the Sacramental Symbols: Answers to Today’s Questions*, trans. Linda M. Maloney (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1990), 109–128.

<sup>28</sup> Frank L. Cross, *1 Peter; A Paschal Liturgy?* (London: Mowbray, 1954); Massey H. Shepherd, *The Paschal Liturgy and the Apocalypse* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1960); Leslie W. Barnard, “The Epistle of Barnabas—A Paschal Homily?” *VC* 15 (1961): 8–22; Pierre Prigent, *Apocalypse et liturgie* (Neuchâtel, Suisse: Éditions Delachaux et Niestlé, 1964); Lionel Swain, *Reading the Easter Gospels* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1993).

the Christology, Pneumatology, and anthropology present within the early paschal writings.<sup>29</sup> Likewise, Gerlach and Stewart-Sykes deserve attention for their studies in the rhetorical aspects of the paschal writings.<sup>30</sup> Lastly, there are those who have dedicated a large record of particular studies to the paschal homilies of Melito, Origen, and Pseudo-Hippolytus.<sup>31</sup>

To a great extent, this scholarship will be a key resource of my investigation. My study is based on their efforts of producing critical editions and commentaries on the paschal texts, contextualizing them, and exploring main themes of these materials. I submit that my research offers a new approach and a new path of exploration to this rich background by investigating paschal writings through the lens of the Second Temple traditions. Among the pioneers of this methodological perspective, I would mention Le Déaut and Daniélou.

#### 4. THE STATEMENT OF PROCEDURE OR METHODOLOGY

The purpose of my exploration is to continue these studies by emphasizing the central role of such christological concepts as “glory,” “Divine Image,” “Demiurge,” and “Divine Anthropos” as well as their function in early paschal theology. As mentioned above, envisioning Christ as glory, Heavenly Man, and luminous Divine Image or Form entails a theological vision and narrative with particular consequences in terms of anthropology, soteriology,

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<sup>29</sup> Jean Daniélou, “Figure et événement chez Meliton,” in *Neotestamentica et patristica: Eine Freundesgabe, Herrn Professor Dr. Oscar Cullmann zu seinem 60. Geburtstag überreicht*, SNT 6 (Leiden: Brill, 1962), 282–292; Othmar Perler, “L’Évangile de Pierre et Mélon de Sardes,” *Rev. Bib.* 71 (1964): 584–590; Rosario P. Merendino, *Paschale sacramentum: Eine Untersuchung über die Osterkatechese des Hl. Athanasius von Alexandrien in ihrer Beziehung zu den frühchristlichen exegetisch-theologischen Überlieferungen* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1965); see also Kretschmar, “Christliches Passa,” and Richardson, “A New Solution.”

<sup>30</sup> Gerlach, *The Antenicene Pascha*; Alistair Stewart-Sykes, *The Lamb’s High Feast: Melito, Peri Pascha, and the Quartodeciman Paschal Liturgy at Sardis* (Leiden: Brill, 1998).

<sup>31</sup> Pierre Nautin, introduction to *Homélies pascales I: Une homélie inspirée du Traité sur la Pâque d’Hippolyte*, SC 27 (Paris: Cerf, 1950); idem, *Le dossier d’Hippolyte et de Mélon dans les florilèges dogmatiques et chez les historiens modernes* (Paris: Cerf, 1953); Cantalamessa, *L’omelia*; Stuart G. Hall, “Melito in the Light of the Passover Haggadah,” *JTS* 22 (1971): 29–46; Mazza, “Omèlie pasquali;” Visonà, *Pseudo Ippolito*; Lynn H. Cohick, *The Peri Pascha Attributed to Melito of Sardis: Setting, Purpose, and Sources* (Providence: Brown Judaic Studies, 2000); Henry M. Knapp, “Melito’s Use of Scripture in *Peri Pascha*,” *VC* 54, no. 4 (2000): 343–374; Paul Gavriljuk, “Melito’s Influence upon the Anaphora of *Apostolic Constitutions* 8.12,” *VC* 59, no. 4 (2005): 355–376; Harald Buchinger, *Pascha bei Origenes* (Innsbruck, Vienna: Tyrolia Verlag, 2005).

and divine economy. Thus, the human being is a copy of the Divine Image, and soteriology becomes either a military campaign aiming to liberate the earthly image, or an eschatological demiurgic process intending to reconstruct the damaged human image. This type of salvific narrative, called “*eikonic soteriology*,” is fundamental for paschal theology and relates to Paul’s Adamic speculations. The main features of this soteriology include Christ’s luminous divine constitution and his salvific functions, either that of Divine Warrior fighting Death and rescuing humanity, or that of Demiurge raising decomposed human bodies and recreating human beings according to his luminous archetypal Form.

Regarding the methods used in this study, I propose an analysis of early paschal theology through the theophanic traditions of Scripture and Second Temple. In so doing, I will emphasize the way several paschal themes—such as the Divine Anthropos, Adam, Divine Glory, Image, Warrior, Demiurge, Son of Man—originated in these traditions and followed particular modalities of evolution in the new theoretical framework of the early Christian liturgical setting. The key methods of my research will be, first, an investigation in the history of ideas and, second, tradition criticism. Additionally, my investigation will be punctuated by exercises in source criticism and textual criticism.

The first part of the book will investigate the presence of the Anthropos theme in early paschal theology, namely, in the paschal writings of Melito, Pseudo-Hippolytus, Origen, and Methodius.<sup>32</sup> This section will also offer the background of the Anthropos theme in the Second Temple and Hellenistic speculations about theophanies, Divine Image, Adam, and salvation. In particular, it will underline the emergence—most likely in the first century CE—of two phenomena of vital significance for the contextual and more appropriate understanding of the noetic paschal Anthropos: the first refers to the Son of Man character as eschatological anthropomorphic figure and eschatological judge, while the second denotes the idea of archetypal, protological Anthropos in Philo and Paul.

The second part of this study will pay special attention to several fundamental titles of the paschal Christ and the salvific theories generated around these titles. One such theory identifies Christ with the descended divine

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<sup>32</sup> I would define “paschal theology” as that theorization developed within Christian homilies and treatises on the feast of the resurrection as well as other materials involving images, concepts, and ideas connected with the resurrection and the Christian Pascha.



glory or *kabod*—which led Israel in the wilderness and dwelled afterwards in the Holy of Holies of the Jerusalem Temple—and understands salvation as emerging through the manifestation of the divine glory; one of the most ancient expectations of the paschal night. A theological feature already present in the prophetic books, “glory soteriology” is also a key element of paschal liturgical and theoretical settings. Within this context, glory soteriology implies a larger vision of a liturgical soteriology in which a complicated system of symbols and rituals performed mainly in the Temple or Church—in this particular case, on the paschal night—becomes a genuine machinery for salvation.

Another divine title pre-eminently associated with Jesus in paschal materials is the aforementioned “*Eikon*.” The second part of the study will include an extensive analysis of this sacred name and the soteriology developed around it. *Eikonic* soteriology, in my opinion, represents a Pauline synthesis of two Second Temple speculations: the hypostatization of the Divine Image and the exaltation of the prelapsarian Adam. On the one hand, I aim to demonstrate that the Anthropos tradition reflects a development of the idea of Divine Image (as in Gen 1:27) through hypostasization and the accumulation of divine titles and functions, especially that of Demiurge. On the other hand, I intend to illustrate the tradition which exalts Adam through accumulation of angelic and quasi-divine attributes. Following this, I will address their eventual synthesis.

Of note is the fact that *eikonic* soteriology knows two versions. First, Tertullian and Methodius follow Paul in conceiving of *eikonic* soteriology as denoting the eschatological recreation of the human being; with Jesus’ figure essentially envisioned as Demiurge. Unlike them, Melito and Pseudo-Hippolytus elaborate an *eikonic* soteriology as a narrative of liberation, where Christ, the Divine Warrior, saves his earthly image damaged and enslaved by Death. The last paschal title is that of Divine Warrior. The associated soteriological vision assumes that Christ as a Divine Warrior fights Death, through his passion and sacrifice, defeats Death, saves humankind, and leads it to the heavenly kingdom.

Following this, the third part of my thesis will explore another key dimension of early paschal theology, namely a vision synthesizing apocalypticism and mystery speculations, while developing new epistemological and hermeneutical methods. The key text of the Christian paschal narrative remains Exodus 12: the theophanic encounter in which Yahweh offers Moses and Aaron several detailed salvific instructions. Melito, Pseudo-Hippolytus, and Origen will read this theophanic text typologically, as referring to Jesus Christ, and announcing in figures either the Christian Pascha or the heav-

only one. Stemming from their observations, paschal exegesis will become a liturgico-hermeneutical enterprise of decoding God's divine mysteries encrypted within the theophanic text of Exodus 12, an activity gradually inviting and initiating the spectator into the invisible realm of mystery.

This section will first unveil certain apocalyptic categories present in the paschal writings—particularly regarding the mystagogue as revealer, sage, scribe, interpreter of mysteries, and decoder of parables—while later showing that paschal exegesis represents a mystery performance of initiation into the realm of mystery: the noetic world. Finally, it will present the emergence of a new chapter in the history of apocalyptic genre: mystery apocalypse. Especially in Pseudo-Hippolytus and Origen, the divine glory descended to earth and subsists within the mystery and noetic realm. Thus, the favoured method of accessing these realities will become *initiation*, instead of ascension, while the suitable epistemic capacity will become the *noesis* or *nous*, instead of vision.<sup>33</sup> Employing a different language, the discourse on the mystery realm actually denotes the same noetic and spiritual domain of reality.

Succeeding this discussion on the noetic and mystery realm, the fourth part of my thesis will focus on the idea of noetic Anthropos. My argument will emphasize the translation of the Heavenly Anthropos figure to the noetic realm. It was a theological position especially developed in some Hellenistic intellectual circles of theologians educated in philosophy and able to operate with the Platonic distinction between the noetic and the aisthetic. To sustain this argument, I will first introduce the noetic Anthropos of paschal materials, and subsequently offer the intellectual Hellenistic background able to clarify this vision. Jewish and Christian Hellenistic authors initiated a genuine epistemological turn in regards to the knowledge of the divine, namely, from sense perception to intellectual perception, from the aisthetic to the noetic intuition. In addition, several Hellenistic texts from the second century BCE to the third century CE—for instance, Pseudo-Orpheus, the Hermetic Corpus, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus of Lyons, Clement of Alexandria, Hippolytus of Rome, Tertullian, and Origen—discuss the “form of God” in philosophical terms and envision the Heavenly Anthropos as a noetic reality.

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<sup>33</sup> While I defend the idea of a turn from apocalypticism to noetic and mystery within these Hellenistic texts, the turn may be also seen as one from ordinary apocalypticism to mystery apocalypticism, since the apocalyptic ontology (involving, e.g., glorious image, divine thrones, angels, humans transformed into glorious beings, etc.) is still present in these materials but transferred to the noetic realm.

As a final conclusion, I will underline the idea that early paschal literature unveils an unexplored, or at least less investigated, area of early Christology which knew a certain popularity in the liturgical contexts of ancient Asia Minor and Egypt. For Melito, Pseudo-Hippolytus, and Origen, Christ is the Divine Warrior who saves humankind from the slavery of Death. Furthermore, Melito and Pseudo-Hippolytus saw in Christ the Divine Image and a human-like noetic figure who saves his image from the slavery of the same archenemy of humankind. In addition, for Tertullian and Methodius, Christ the Divine Image is the Demiurge who recreates the human being at the eschaton according to its own model. Centered on the *eikonic* soteriology narrative and conceiving of Christ as a noetic Anthropos, pre-Nicene paschal theology encapsulates a special Christology shaped within the liturgical context of the second and third centuries. This Christology is based on christological speculations concerning the noetic Anthropos, and on such first-century doctrines regarding the figures of the Son of Man, the divine or protological Anthropos, and Pauline *eikonic* soteriology. Compared to the Nicene Christology—where the Son shares the invisible and unfathomable nature of the Father—early Christology frequently unveils a noetic Christ, the Divine Image accessible through noetic perception.

PART ONE

THE DIVINE ANTHROPOS OF THE PRE-NICENE PASCHAL TEXTS



## INTRODUCTION TO PART ONE

Paschal oration was already a notable genre in the second century CE. Eusebius of Caesarea witnesses that Melito wrote two books on the paschal feast.<sup>1</sup> The *Chronicon Paschale*, a Byzantine document of the seventh century, asserts that one of Melito's contemporaries, Apollinarius of Hierapolis (fl. 160–180), was also the author of a paschal homily.<sup>2</sup> Eusebius additionally avows that Clement of Alexandria composed a book entitled *On the Passover* at the express supplication of some of his friends demanding an exposition of the ancient tradition of the Elders or Presbyters of the early Church on this topic.<sup>3</sup> Eusebius affirms that Clement alluded to Melito and Irenaeus in the document, perhaps assessing them among the Elders (or at least preserving their traditions).<sup>4</sup> This remarkable observation makes the connection between the Asiatic and Alexandrian traditions and, moreover, between these traditions and the early tradition of the Elders.<sup>5</sup> While Pseudo-Hippolytus was most likely an Asiatic author, Origen, too, has to be added to this ancestral tradition.<sup>6</sup> I must also emphasize the idea that these early traditions of the Elders are in strong connection with Jewish Christianity and the Second Temple traditions which Jewish Christianity

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<sup>1</sup> Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 4.26.2.

<sup>2</sup> The *Chronicon Paschale* preserves a few sentences of his text (PG 92:80C–D).

<sup>3</sup> Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 4.26 and 6.13.9. The *Chronicon Paschale* also preserves a few sentences of Clement's oration (PG 92:81A–B).

<sup>4</sup> Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.13.9. Thus, it is also plausible that Irenaeus wrote something on this subject.

<sup>5</sup> For the fascinating early Jewish-Christian traditions of the Elders and the way Clement preserved them see, for instance, Jean Daniélou, "Les traditions secrètes des Apôtres," *ErJb* 31 (1962), 199–215; Idem, *The Theology of Jewish Christianity*, trans. John A. Baker (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1964), 45–54; Gedaliahu Stroumsa, *Hidden Wisdom: Esoteric Traditions and the Roots of Christian Mysticism* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 27–45, 109–131, and Bogdan G. Bucur, *Angelomorphic Pneumatology: Clement of Alexandria and Other Early Christian Witnesses* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 3–86. Daniélou even affirms that his monumental *The Theology of Jewish Christianity* is an attempt at reconstructing the main traditions associated with these Elders/Presbyters who generally refer to the Jewish-Christian intellectual universe of the Apostles and their disciples (*Theology*, 46).

<sup>6</sup> For Origen's connection with the early traditions of the Elders as well as with Jewish Second Temple traditions, see Stroumsa, *Hidden Wisdom*, 27–45, 109–131, and David Halperin, *The Faces of the Chariot: Early Jewish Responses to Ezekiel's Vision* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1988), 318–358.

preserved.<sup>7</sup> From a socio-cultural perspective, this position is accepted since Judaism represented an ancient and influential reality in both Alexandria and Asia Minor at the time when Christianity flourished in these areas and generated its earliest paschal liturgical formulas. While Alexandrian Judaism represents the environment which created the Septuagint and many biblical and extra-biblical writings, Asia Minor was also the place of an early and active Jewish presence.<sup>8</sup>

The main conceptual instruments I will employ, in order to unravel and reconstruct the early paschal Christology, consist of a series of divine titles commonly ascribed to the God of the Hebrew Bible and Second Temple literature. Thus, Christ's divine dimension is frequently connoted as the Lord of Glory (*Kabod*), the King of the [Heavenly] Hosts (Yahweh Sabaoth), the Divine Image, the Son of Man, the Logos, the Demiurge, and/or the Heavenly Anthropos. Each of these titles indicates human-like features, and is a part of the pre-Nicene christological language which shares common elements with Biblical parlance. The logical interconnections between the aforementioned titles represent a less investigated topic in modern scholarship. Among them, the figure of the Heavenly Anthropos is one of the most widely discussed concepts which may subsume a few other functions; the Divine Image, the Son of Man, and the Demiurge act as particular aspects of such a rich theoretical category.

The initial chapter of this first part will be dedicated to the presence of this enigmatic figure in the earliest paschal materials (specifically in the works of Melito, Pseudo-Hippolytus, Origen, and Methodius), while the second chapter will try to find the roots of this figure in Second Temple traditions and other Hellenistic contexts. We will see that the Heavenly Anthropos figure in itself is very diverse, and implies a large spectrum of ontological statuses and functions, the phrase denoting a wide variety of conceptions from a Platonic paradigm to quasi-angelic and quasi-divine characters. At the end of this investigation, one may conclude that the Paschal Anthropos reflects a special Heavenly Anthropos trend, namely, one rooted in the

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<sup>7</sup> See Daniélou, Stroumsa, and Bucur in note 5. For apocalyptic and Second Temple traditions in Pseudo-Hippolytus, see Dragoş A. Giulea, "Pseudo-Hippolytus's *In Sanctum Pascha: A Mystery Apocalypse*," in *Apocalyptic Thought in Early Christianity*, ed. Robert J. Daly (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academics, 2009), 127–142.

<sup>8</sup> Paul R. Treilco affirms that "Jewish communities were established in a number of cities in Asia Minor by 139–8 BCE." See his *Jewish Communities in Asia Minor* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 6.

Pauline texts. Paschal writings, therefore, echo the Pauline construction of this concept, preserving the ontological status and soteriological functions which Paul associates with this title. This is also the case with the title Son of Man.





## CHAPTER ONE

### THE DIVINE ANTHROPOS THEME IN PRE-NICENE PASCHAL MATERIALS

To those who have engaged in such studies as this, it is an obvious fact that the three paschal homilies ultimately represent three commentaries on Exodus 12. One may recall that Exodus 12 is the moment in which Yahweh instructs Moses and Aaron to sacrifice and consume a pure lamb in a special way in order to save the Jewish people from the Egyptian oppression.

Beyond the few details of this passage, we cannot avoid taking notice of its theophanic nature, in which God speaks to the two ancient heroes of faith and imparts sacred and salvific information to them. The Exodus 12 will therefore become a key sacred text to both Judaism and Christianity, with Christians inserting it into their paschal liturgy from Melito's times—as he attests in the very first verses of his homily—to the present day. Moreover, since the paschal homilies/tractates of Melito, Pseudo-Hippolytus, and Origen represent commentaries of this theophanic text, it is very plausible that Christian paschal orations started as an exegetical endeavor; namely, that of commenting on Exodus 12 within the liturgical context of the paschal vigil.

In addition to this, the homilists tried to offer the Christian meaning of Pascha. It was probably this logical necessity of reaching the Christian meaning and vision of this theophanic text that made early Christians always add a second part: the Christian understanding of the Pascha. This second part encapsulates the main theological emphasis of the documents. Melito, Pseudo-Hippolytus, and Origen share this discursive strategy and formal partition of their texts. Besides this division, there are also two hermeneutical keys present in all three authors' works: typology and christological interpretation. First, the typological method presupposes that each element of Exodus 12 denotes a pre-figuration of a truth revealed in Jesus Christ after his incarnation. Second, the christological interpretation equates Yahweh, who saves the Israelites, with Jesus Christ. Thus, the three texts envision only one divine hero and savior: Jesus Christ, active in both testaments, before and after his incarnation.

Additionally, one of the most remarkable aspects of paschal theology is reflected in the Adamic and anthropomorphic traditions also witnessed in all three of the aforementioned paschal texts. The following analysis

will address those passages which reflect the tradition of a heavenly human-like Image, or *Anthropos*.

### 1. MELITO OF SARDIS

Some verses of Melito's *Peri Pascha* depict Christ as a cosmic Man. The starting point of this discussion should be the aforementioned idea that Christ the Logos represents the active soteriological agent in both Old and New Testaments. This hermeneutical strategy is part of an early Christian exegetical method which may be addressed as the *Bible re-written through the christological lens*, since Melito identifies Yahweh with Christ and interprets all the Old Testament narratives about Yahweh in christological terms.<sup>1</sup> The result of Melito's hermeneutical method is the thought that there is only one mystery of the Pascha, as Christ worked in both the old and the new Pascha. Melito writes to this effect in the following passage:

Understand, therefore, beloved, how it is new and old, eternal and temporary (ἀίδιον καὶ πρόσκαιρον), perishable and imperishable (φθαρτὸν καὶ ἀφθαρτον), mortal and immortal (θνητὸν καὶ ἀθάνατον), this mystery of the Pascha (τὸ τοῦ πάσχα μυστήριον): old as regards the law (νόμον), but new as regards the word (λόγον); temporary as regards the model (τύπον), eternal because of the grace (χάριν); perishable because of the slaughter of the sheep, imperishable because of the life of the Lord; mortal because of the burial (ταφήν) in earth, immortal because of the rising (ἀνάστασιν) from the dead.<sup>2</sup>

Since it is the same divine agent who operates in both testaments, the Pascha is old and new, temporary and eternal, perishable and imperishable, mortal and immortal. Every first term in these pairs of opposites denotes an attribute of Christ's manifestation in the Old Testament. Thus, "old," "temporary," "perishable," and "mortal," reflect the "old law," the "temporary type," the "perishable" and "mortal sheep." In contrast, every second term refers to the new manifestations of the Logos, perceived in a new light; they are "eternal," "imperishable," and "immortal." These two opposite series of attributes suggest a Platonic dual world, where the divine Logos or Truth (ἀλήθεια) replaces the eternal and incorruptible ideas.<sup>3</sup>

Although the divine and human dimensions of Christ are conspicuously present in the Melitenean discourse, they are differently expressed than in

<sup>1</sup> See for this especially Bogdan G. Bucur, "Exegesis of Biblical Theophanies in Byzantine Hymnography: Rewritten Bible?" *TS* 68 (2007): 92–112.

<sup>2</sup> Melito, *Peri Pascha* 2–3 (hereafter cited in text as *PP*).

<sup>3</sup> For Plato, see, for instance, *Timaeus* 27e–28a. For ἀλήθεια, see Melito, *PP* 4.32.

post-Nicene christological vocabulary, including all the other christological councils. The reader has to operate a sort of *epoché* of his/her familiar concepts and put them into parentheses in order to grasp the remarkable thought of the Sardisean bishop.<sup>4</sup> In his divine dimension, Christ is not conceived of as an abstract nature but as a lofty, immaterial, and glorious entity. To illustrate this idea of entity, *Peri Pascha* 45 portrays Christ as the “Jerusalem above” descended with a “widespread grace” (πλατεία χάρις), and interprets this descent in the following manner:<sup>5</sup>

For it is not in one place nor in a little plot that the glory of God is established (ἡ τοῦ θεοῦ δόξα καθίδρυται), but on all the ends of the inhabited earth his bounty (χάρις) overflows, and there the almighty God (ὁ παντοκράτωρ θεός) has made his dwelling (κατεσκήνωσεν) through Christ Jesus.<sup>6</sup>

The text may refer to the Old Testament glory, or Lord of Glory, who dwells enthroned in heaven or in the Temple (see, for instance, Isa 6:1–5). The heavenly figure now “is established, set down, consecrated” (καθίδρυται) all over the world. In addition, Christ manifested himself in the law, the sheep, and the lamb of the Old Testament, as in a parable, and fully (as Logos and Truth) after his incarnation. As Melito further asserts, the humanity of Christ—the man—veils the Christ who comprised all things (ἐν δὲ τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ Χριστὸς ὅς κεχώρηκεν [τὰ] πάντα).<sup>7</sup>

Nevertheless, the Latin version of these two verses is different from the Greek. Othmar Perler even shows that Latin manuscripts do not follow the extant Greek manuscripts but a different Greek manuscript tradition.<sup>8</sup> The Latin versions read *homo autem Christus in quo capiuntur omnia*, which may be rendered as: “but the man is Christ in which all are comprised.”<sup>9</sup> The earthly man, Jesus, is the same with the cosmic Christ who encapsulates the whole universe.

<sup>4</sup> Melito indeed affirms that Christ “rose from the dead as God, being by nature God and Man (φύσει θεὸς ὢν καὶ ἄνθρωπος);” see *PP* 8.53. A monophysite reading of the verse would be an anachronism.

<sup>5</sup> *PP* 45.293. The descent of the Jerusalem above may be connected with the vision of the descent of the heavenly Jerusalem of the Book of Revelation 3:12 and 21:2;10; Rev 21:11 describes this Jerusalem shining “with the glory (δόξαν) of God; it had the radiance (φωσθήρ) of some priceless jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal.” Cf. Rev 21:23.

<sup>6</sup> *PP* 45.294–299.

<sup>7</sup> *PP* 5.35. The expression “the one who comprises all” is also a divine attribute in Irenaeus of Lyons (e.g., *Haer.* 4.20.2).

<sup>8</sup> SC 123:49.

<sup>9</sup> SC 123:63.

But this is an old theme of early Christian mindset; namely, the theme of Christ, the cosmic support or pillar of the universe. One may consider *Peri Pascha* 96 as an example of this theme: “He who hung the earth is hanging; he who fixed (ὁ πῆξας) the heavens has been fixed (πεπήκται); he who fastened the universe (ὁ στηρίξας τὰ πάντα) has been fastened to a tree (ἐπὶ ξύλου ἐστήρικται).”<sup>10</sup> Jean Daniélou’s observation on this passage is significant for our present inquiry. In his *Theology of Jewish Christianity*, the French scholar considers *PP* 96 in correlation to Irenaeus of Lyons’ description of the invisible and divine Christ:

For the Creator of the world is truly the Word of God; and this is our Lord who in the last times was made Man, existing in this world, and who in His invisible nature contains all created things, being implanted (*infixus*) in the whole Creation, since the Word of God governs and arranges all things; and that is why He came to His own in a visible manner, and was made flesh, and hung upon the tree, that He might sum up all things in Himself, in such a way that His own creation bore Him, which itself is borne by Him.<sup>11</sup>

The similarity of the two texts is striking, since they incorporate the same logic: Jesus Christ, who was crucified on the cross in his human form, is actually the one who, in his divine condition, sustains the universe. It is worth mentioning that early Christians imagined Jesus’ divine dimension as a gigantic, cosmic Cross. As Daniélou asserts:

There is certainly an allusion to the Cross here [in Irenaeus], which is confirmed by a parallel text in Melito: ‘He who bears the Universe is borne by the tree.’ In the text of Irenaeus the Cross symbolizes the summing up of all things by the Word, but this summing up is only possible because the Word contains all things. The train of thought is the same as that of Col. 1:20.<sup>12</sup>

In a different passage, Daniélou expounds on the verb στηρίζω, which Melito uses in connection with Christ who fastens or consolidates the universe. The verb, he notes, reappears with the same meaning in two other early writings.<sup>13</sup> The first is also an Irenaeian text, an account of a Gnostic doctrine about Horos (i.e., the Limit), one of the aeons emanated from the Father. This aeon enjoys a privileged status, as long as it retains other important attributes such as “Cross (σταυρός), Redeemer (λυτρωτής), Reaper (καρπι-

<sup>10</sup> *PP* 96.711–714.

<sup>11</sup> Irenaeus, *Haer.* 5.18.3. Trans. *ANF* 1:546.

<sup>12</sup> Daniélou, *Theology of Jewish Christianity*, 283.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.* 284–287.

στής), Guide of the Return (μεταγωγεύς),<sup>14</sup> and it is conceived as a power which consolidates (ἔστηρίχθαι) all the aeons and preserves them outside of the inexpressible greatness of the Father.<sup>15</sup> Undoubtedly all these attributes are christological titles ascribed to the aeon Horos, and its function of consolidating the universe is one of the demiurgic functions of the noetic Anthropos. The second writing is Pseudo-Hippolytus's *In sanctum Pascha* 51, a text obviously portraying Christ as the Divine Anthropos consolidating the universe, as will be addressed later in this study.

Although Melito's Christ preserves several old attributes of the anthropomorphic Yahweh—such as a glorious nature and a gigantic extension, in addition to the demiurgic and salvific functions and the capacity to work wonders in the history of humankind—he does not seem to have anthropomorphic delineations in the Greek extant manuscripts. Nevertheless, there are certain documents indicating Melito as an anthropomorphist. One of the documents ascribed to Origen reveals Melito's belief in God's corporeality; therefore, in his heavenly human-like figure. In *Selecta in Genesim* 25, while commenting on Gen 1:26, Origen affirms that Melito was among the literal interpreters of the Bible in terms of anthropomorphism, and that for Melito the image (εἰκὼν) of God in the human being is located in the body (ἐν σώματι), which is logical for a corporeal understanding of the image. This idea would be, in fact, another common conception with Irenaeus of Lyons. Furthermore, according to Origen, the Bishop of Sardis even wrote about the fact that God had a body (περὶ τοῦ ἐνσώματον εἶναι τὸν Θεόν).<sup>16</sup>

As Griffin and Paulsen evince, the idea that Melito was an anthropomorphist reoccurs in some heresiological literature.<sup>17</sup> Griffin and Paulsen continue their argument supposing that

Origen's assertion about Melito's συγγράμματα περὶ τοῦ ἐνσώματον εἶναι τὸν Θεόν actually refers to Melito's lost ὁ περὶ ἐνσωμάτου θεοῦ λόγος (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 4.26.2). If so, Origen was probably acquainted with the title only and has misunderstood what was certainly a treatise on the incarnation to be a treatise on the corporeal/anthropomorphic nature of God.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Irenaeus, *Haer.* 1.2.4.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.* 1.2.2.

<sup>16</sup> Origen, *Sel. Gen.* 25 (PG 12.93.11–13).

<sup>17</sup> Carl W. Griffin and David L. Paulsen, "Augustine and the Corporeality of God," *HTR* 95 (2002): 102, n. 27: "Even though it is not apparent in any of Melito's extant writings, the charge against him of anthropomorphism persisted in the heresiological literature."

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

Nevertheless, this last assertion is quite implausible, since Jean Daniélou proves that Origen was not only acquainted with the work of the Sardisian bishop but also quoted him a few times.<sup>19</sup> Consequently, it is very plausible that Origen's assertion was an accurate description of Melito's ideas, and the Sardisean was indeed an anthropomorphist.

In the same writing, Origen also presents an argument of the Anthropomorphite party; namely, that God has to have a form (*μορφή*) because he showed himself to Abraham and Moses, and a vision is possible only through the mediation of a form.<sup>20</sup> We will further discover that Tertullian and the author of the *Ps-Clementine Homilies* assume the same epistemological principle in order to defend the existence of a Divine Form. In *Selecta in Genesim*, therefore, Origen describes a system with a large amount of elements usually employed by the defenders of a Divine Form of God. If this system belonged to Melito, it is very reasonable to think that the Sardisean shared an early Christian position we will further encounter in Justin, Tertullian, Clement, *Pseudo-Clementines*, and very probably Irenaeus.

In search of Melito's genuine, or original, thinking, one has to remove another element which the ancient editors added to his theological thinking; namely, his defense of an incorporeal God. Several fragments of lost Melitonian works describing the Son as incorporeal seem to be spurious. As Stuart Hall observes, fragments 13.2, 14.3, and the new fragment II 4.34, in which the term "incorporeal" is predicated of the heavenly Son, are also ascribed in other manuscripts to Alexander of Alexandria, Athanasius, Epiphanius, or John Chrysostom.<sup>21</sup> At the same time, there are no anthropo-

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<sup>19</sup> E.g., *Comm. Pss.* 3.1, *Comm. Gen.* 1.26, or *Comm. Matt.* 10.9–11; see Daniélou, "Figure et événement chez Meliton," in *Neotestamentica et patristica: Eine Freundesgabe, Herrn Professor Dr. Oscar Cullmann zu seinem 60. Geburtstag überreicht*, SNT 6 (Leiden: Brill, 1962), 290–292.

<sup>20</sup> Origen, *Sel. Gen.* 25. Two Syriac fragments ascribed (among others) to Melito—namely, Fr. 13.2 (H. 80) and Fr. 14.3 (H. 81)—associate the attribute "immaterial" with the Son. However, Hall deems as questionable the attribution of these fragments to Melito (Hall, *Melito of Sardis*, xxxiv–vii), which may be an effort of ranking the famous bishop in line with post-Nicene Christology.

<sup>21</sup> Hall, *Melito*, 81, n. 56. For the manuscripts preserving these fragments, see Hall, *Melito*, xxxiii–xxxix. Hall also points out many other similarities between these fragments and *Peri Pascha* in terms of vocabulary, imagery, and doctrine. Cf. R. Cantalamessa, "Méliton de Sardes, une christologie antignostique du i<sup>me</sup> siècle," *RevScRel* 37 (1963): 1–26. Nevertheless, Hall points out as well those terminologies in these fragments which reflect theological interests and terminologies of later periods and can hardly be associated with Melito. Cf. Pierre Nautin, *Le Dossier d'Hippolyte et de Méliton dans les florilèges dogmatiques et chez les historiens modernes* (Paris: Cerf, 1953). For the fragments, see Hall, *Melito*, 80, 81, and 87 respectively.

morphic elements in *Peri Pascha* (apart from the mention of the μορφή θεοῦ). Thus, it may be presumed either that a later editor made some “corrections” to the Melitonian text, or that the Melitonian understanding of μορφή θεοῦ was actually less material than the Origenian text suggests.

## 2. PSEUDO-HIPPOLYTUS

Pseudo-Hippolytus envisions Christ as an anthropomorphic and, therefore, Adamic figure of cosmic dimensions and luminous consistency. In *sanctum Pascha* 1.1–12 portrays Christ as a mighty (μέγας), immortal, and immense (πολύς) reality, shedding light brighter than that of the sun.<sup>22</sup> While John 9:5 defines Jesus Christ as “the light of the world,” *IP* 55.11 attaches the attribute “mighty” (τὸ μέγα τοῦ κόσμου φῶς). Following this description, *IP* 26 discloses two new expressions—“the great body of Christ” and “Christ’s fiery and rational body” (ἔμπυρον γὰρ λογικὸν σῶμα τοῦ Χριστοῦ)—echoing the famous Pauline reference to Christ’s body of glory in Phil 3:21. Furthermore, *IP* 3.4, 17.14, and 45.23 depict Jesus Christ using the title ἀνατολή (the “Orient” or the “Dawn”), a noun which sometimes is qualified as πνευματική (“spiritual,” *IP* 45.23).

On the premises of this understanding of Christ’s divine nature, Jesus’ historical and earthly existence may be seen as a human body encapsulating the glory as a garment (an ancient christological terminology similarly present in Melito, *PP* 47; cf. *IP* 61). Pseudo-Hippolytus also envisions incarnation as the process in which Christ’s huge luminous dimension becomes contracted (συστείλας), collected (συναθροίσας), and compressed (συναγαγών) to the shape of the earthly human body.<sup>23</sup> While contracting the immensity of his whole divinity (τὸ μέγεθος πᾶν τῆς θεότητος), his glory remains unchanged, undiminished, and concealed within the confines of the mundane form:

<sup>22</sup> The idea of a gigantic body of Christ occurs for example in *In sanctum Pascha* 1.12 (hereafter cited in text as *IP*): μέγας Χριστός; 2.3: μεγάλη μεγάλη βασιλέως ἐπιδημία; 9.28: μεγάλου βασιλέως; 32.3: τῷ μεγάλῳ σώματι; 45.10: τὸ μέγεθος πᾶν τῆς θεότητος (cf. Col 2:9: πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα τῆς θεότητος). The text also informs us about the cosmic extension of Christ’s hands, e.g., *IP* 15.14: τῶν ἐκταθεισῶν χειρῶν Ἰησοῦ; 38.3–4: χεῖρας ἐξέτεινας πατρικᾶς, ἐκάλυψας ἡμᾶς ἐντὸς τῶν πτερύγων σου τῶν πατρικῶν; 63.2–3: τὰς χεῖρας τὰς μεγάλας. For the gigantic dimensions of the cosmic tree and body, see also *IP* 51.

<sup>23</sup> For ἔδω, see *IP* 26.1; for the other three attributes, see *IP* 45.10–11. The idea is not new in a Christian context; cf. Phil 2:6; *Odes of Solomon* 7:3–6; *Acts of Thomas* 15 and 80.



He willingly confined himself to himself and collecting and, compressing in himself all the greatness of the divinity, came in the dimensions of his own choice in no way diminished or lessened in himself, nor inferior in glory (οὐ μειούμενος ἐν ἑαυτῷ οὐδὲ ἐλαττούμενος οὐδὲ τῇ δόξῃ δαπανούμενος).<sup>24</sup>

*IP* 51 offers a remarkable account of a gigantic tree which touches the heavens and makes the earth firm by its feet, while its huge “hands” embrace like a cross the winds between heaven and earth:

This cross is the tree of my eternal salvation (μοι φυτὸν εἰς σωτηρίαν αἰώνιον) nourishing and delighting me. I take root in its roots, I am extended in its branches, I am delighted by its dew, I am fertilized by its spirit (τῷ πνεύματι) as by a delightful breeze. In my tent I am shaded by its shade and fleeing the excessive heat I find this refuge moist with dew. Its flowers are my flowers; I am wholly delighted by its fruits and I feast unrestrainedly on its fruits which are reserved for me always. This is my nourishment when I am hungry, my fountain when I am thirsty, my covering when I am stripped, for my leaves are no longer fig leaves but the breath of life (τὰ φύλλα πνεύμα ζωῆς). This is my safeguard when I fear God, my support when I falter, my prize when I enter combat, and my trophy when I triumph. This is my narrow path (ἀτραπὸς ἡ στενή), my steep way (ἡ τεθλιμμένη ὁδός). This is the ladder (κλίμαξ) of Jacob, the way (πορεία) of angels, at the summit of which the Lord is truly established (ἐστήρικται). This is my tree, wide as the firmament (δένδρον οὐρανομήκης), which extends from earth to the heavens (ἀπὸ γῆς εἰς οὐρανὸς ἀνέβαινεν), with its immortal trunk established between heaven and earth (φυτὸν στηρίζας ἑαυτὸν ἐν μέσῳ οὐρανοῦ τε καὶ γῆς); it is the pillar of the universe (ἔρεισμα τῆς ὅλης οἰκουμένης), the support of the whole world (στήριγμα τοῦ παντός), the joint of the world (σύμπλεγμα κοσμικόν), holding together the variety of human nature, and riveted by the invisible bolts of the Spirit (ἀοράτοις γόμοις τοῦ πνεύματος), so that it may remain fastened to the divinity (τῷ θεῷ) and impossible to detach. Its top touches the highest heavens (Ἄκραις μὲν κορυφαῖς τῶν οὐρανῶν ἐπιψάνων), its roots are planted in the earth (τὴν γῆν δὲ στηρίζων ποσί), and in the midst its giant arms (χερσὶν ἀμετρήτοις) embrace the ever present breaths of air (πνεύμα τοῦ ἀέρος). It is wholly in all things and in all places (ἐν πᾶσι καὶ πανταχοῦ).<sup>25</sup>

<sup>24</sup> *IP* 45.10–13. Cf. Melito of Sardis, *Frg.* 14. For a more detailed analysis in the context of the second century, see Cantalamessa, *L’Omelia*, 187–273. Also, cf. Philo, *Gig.* 6.27: “the good spirit, the spirit which is everywhere diffused, so as to fill the universe, which, while it benefits others, is not injured by having a participation in it given to another, and if added to something else, either as to its understanding, or its knowledge, or its wisdom.”

<sup>25</sup> Ps-Hippolytus, *IP* 51. Cf. *IP* 63, for the hands of God. For Theophilus of Antioch, the Holy Spirit is identical with the “Hand of God,” one of the most ancient Jewish anthropomorphic expressions for the Spirit of God, e.g., Exod 15:16; 32:11; Deut 6:21; 7:8,19; 9:26; Isa 25:10; or Ezek 37:1 where the hand of God is identified with the Spirit of God. It can be found even in the first Letter of Peter 5:6. Actually, the Hebrew word **יָד** denotes simultaneously “hand” and “power,”

These lines represent one of the most impressive first-person mystical passages of antiquity. The mystic starts his/her account by reporting his/her identification with the cross through a successive transformation into the roots, branches, and flowers of the tree. Scholars have also noticed that the cross is first identified with a tree, second with the pillar of the universe, and, finally, with Christ himself.<sup>26</sup>

On the one hand, this cross is the cosmic tree, the *arbor mundi* and *axis mundi* which connects heaven and earth, and the sacred and the profane, an ancient theme present in various ancient religions.<sup>27</sup> For Pseudo-Hippolytus, this tree is “wide as the firmament,” extended “from earth to the heavens,” with the “trunk established between heaven and earth.” Likewise, the tree is the “pillar of the universe,” an image which still alludes to the idea of *axis mundi*, and it is also the “support (στήριγμα) of the whole world,” a phrase which refers to its consolidating function in the universe, as Daniélou noticed in his study.<sup>28</sup> In addition, the verb *στηρίζω* (to make fast, to consolidate), which Daniélou pointed out as denoting one of the cosmic functions of Christ as gigantic cross, is twice used in connection with the functions this tree plays in the universe.

On the other hand, the author suggests that the cosmic tree is identical with the cosmic body of Christ represented in obvious anthropomorphic features. His tops reach the heaven, his feet the earth, while his gigantic arms embrace the atmosphere.<sup>29</sup> Since this body is not Jesus’ earthly body, it should consequently stand for the heavenly and divine Christ, the Man or Anthropos from heaven.

While the identity between the cross and the cosmic tree is a conspicuous element in this account, Daniélou’s position regarding the cosmic cross

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the latter term being a well-known synonym for the Spirit (e.g., Micah 3:8). For Irenaeus of Lyons, the Son and the Holy Spirit are the hands of God in the universe.

<sup>26</sup> Henri de Lubac, “L’arbre cosmique,” in *Mélanges E. Podechard* (Lyon: Facultés catholiques, 1945), 191–198, 192. See also Gerardus Q. Reijnders, *The Terminology of the Holy Cross in Early Christian Literature, As Based upon Old Testament Typology* (Nijmegen: Dekker & Van de Vegt, 1965); Cantalamessa, *Lomelia*, 109–138; Vittorio Grossi, “La Pasqua quartodecimana e il significato della croce nel II secolo,” *Aug* 16 (1976): 557–571; W.J. McCarthy, *Sol Salutis, Arbor Mundi, Lucerna Christi: Cosmic Cross and Cosmic Christ in a Second Century A.D. Paschal Homily (A Literary Interpretation)* (PhD diss., The Catholic University of America, 1983), 135–188; Visonà, *Pseudo-Ippolito*, 466–478.

<sup>27</sup> See Eliade, *Patterns*, 265–330. The theme of the tree as *axis mundi* has a larger circulation than the Hellenistic world, as McCarthy presupposes in his *Sol Salutis, Arbor Mundi*. Scandinavian, German, Mesopotamian, and Vedic mythologies similarly convey this symbol.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Daniélou, *Theology*, 287.

<sup>29</sup> See also *IP* 63 for the gigantic hands (τὰς χεῖρας τὰς μεγάλας) of Christ.

fortifying the universe is again supported in *IP* 51 and *IP* 56. In the latter passage, Pseudo-Hippolytus addresses Christ directly with a hymn in which he equates the crucified Jesus with the divine and cosmic cross:

O divine extension (τῆς θείας ἐκστάσεως) in all things and everywhere! O crucifixion spread out in the whole universe (τῆς διὰ πάντων ἀπλουμένης σταυρώσεως). O you who art unique among all things unique in the universe, may the heavens possess your spirit, and paradise your soul—for he said, *This day will I be with you in paradise*—and may the earth possess your body. For the indivisible is divided (Μεμέρισται ὁ ἀμερήγς) so that all may be saved (ἵνα τὰ πάντα σωθῆ), so that even the lowest place may be accessible to the divine coming (τῆς θείας ἐπιδημίας).<sup>30</sup>

The remarkable thing is that the passage, following the Passion Narrative, is also preeminently christological. The reader finds out towards the end of the passage that the vague term “divine extension” refers unquestionably to Christ, who divided his being at the moment of death: the spirit ascended to heaven with the Father, the soul went to Paradise with the thief, while his body remained in the tomb. The divine extension, therefore, has to be that of the heavenly Christ, namely, the extension of his divine and cosmic body. The author differentiates between the gigantic and invisible body of Christ and his visible body buried in the tomb. His body of gigantic proportions represents a cosmic crucifixion (σταύρωσις) of an indivisible nature, extended into the substance of the entire universe. Pseudo-Hippolytus informs us that salvation comes through this cosmic extension of the divine Christ. As articulated in *IP* 51, salvation may also be seen as the consequence of the mystical experience in which the visionary becomes one with Christ’s cosmic body. For Pseudo-Hippolytus, salvation represents the transformation of the visionary into Christ’s gigantic, glorious, noetic, and fiery corporeality. This soteriological vision should be connected with the *eikonic* soteriology addressed in the second part of this book, where salvation is envisioned as the re-creation of the primordial luminous body of Adam.

A final remark should also be made in regard to the Christology and Pneumatology of this text. The text seems to fail in making a clear distinction between the Son and the Spirit, as examined through Cantalamessa and Simonetti. These two scholars deemed that the Christology of the text could easily be classified as Spirit-Christology.<sup>31</sup> Spirit-Christology, a doctrine

<sup>30</sup> *IP* 56 (Hamman’s translation slightly altered).

<sup>31</sup> See Cantalamessa, *L’omilia*. Simonetti, “Note di Cristologia pneumatologica,” *Aug* 12 (1972): 201–232.

largely spread in early Christianity—due to the undeveloped Pneumatological theorization of the time—seems to occur in *In sanctum Pascha* as well. There are also instances (e.g., *IP* 45) where Christ is described as “Spirit,” an early Christian vision in which the term “spirit” is actually synonymous with “divine.” On the other hand, there are instances where the word “Spirit” is attributed to Christ, as Christ’s inseparable agent in his economic activity.

*IP*35, for example, portrays Christ as a staff upon which the seven Isaianic divine spirits find their rest:

The staff of Moses, the staff of Aaron, the nut-like staff, the staff which cleaves the depths of the (Red) sea, the staff which makes sweet the bitter waters, the staff on which repose the seven holy spirits of God (τὰ ἑπτὰ πνεύματα τὰ ἅγια ἀνεπαύσατο τοῦ θεοῦ): the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and strength (the spirit of knowledge and godliness), the spirit of the fear of God shall fill him (Isa 11:2).<sup>32</sup>

They are also the signs of the divine power (τῆς θείας δυνάμεος τὰ σημεῖα) and the pillars or the props of his noetic might (τῆς λογικῆς ἰσχύος τὰ ἐρείσματα).<sup>33</sup> Following the same line of thought, the aforementioned passage (*IP* 51) specifically depicts Christ as a tree provided with roots, trunk, branches, and flowers, and identifies the Spirit with the leaves of the tree: “leaves are no longer fig leaves but the breath of life (τὰ φύλλα πνεύμα ζωῆς).”<sup>34</sup> Likewise, *IP* 55 describes the Divine Spirit rising again, separating from Christ at the moment of his death on the cross, and ascending to heaven. Through this journey, the Spirit acts to restore the life, vitality, and stability (ψυχοῦμενον καὶ ζωοποιούμενον καὶ στηριζόμενον) of the whole universe.<sup>35</sup>

The Spirit, therefore, is the Spirit of Christ and accompanied him during his earthly life.<sup>36</sup> In chapters 55–56, the author makes the Spirit leave Jesus at the moment of his death and revivify the entire cosmos which assisted at the passion as a spectator contemplating a dramatic representation at the

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<sup>32</sup> *IP* 35. As Bucur shows in *Angelomorphic Pneumatology*, the language of the seven spirits represents a major early Jewish and Christian pneumatological paradigm.

<sup>33</sup> *IP* 35.

<sup>34</sup> *IP* 51.16.

<sup>35</sup> *IP* 55.

<sup>36</sup> The same idea that the Holy Spirit covers the body of Jesus as an unction, sometimes discovered as light or glory, can be seen in Irenaeus, according to Y. de Andia, *Homo vivens: Incorruptibilité et divinisation de l'homme selon Irénée de Lyon* (Paris: Études augustiniennes, 1986), 185–223; and Anthony Briggman, “The Holy Spirit as the Unction of Christ in Irenaeus,” *JTS* 61:1 (2010): 171–193.

end of which, as in an ancient tragedy, remains horrified and petrified by Jesus' death. The author assumes as well that the divine Spirit of Christ will take his place somewhere in the heavens.<sup>37</sup> Nonetheless, it is hard to separate between the Spirit and Christ's divine dimension, the glorious form spread everywhere in the universe, including human souls. Even if Pseudo-Hippolytus was not a binitarian, it is difficult to see how the Spirit is really different from Jesus Christ's divine and glorious dimension.

### 3. ORIGEN OF ALEXANDRIA

For Origen, the word "Pascha" has primarily the meaning of "passage" rather than "sacrifice." It is for this reason that the author's text gravitates around the conception of Pascha as passage. While Melito and Pseudo-Hippolytus understood the Christian Pascha as the fulfillment of the Temple Passover, Origen conceives even of the Christian Pascha as a pre-figuration of the heavenly mysteries:

Just as the mysteries of the passover which are celebrated in the Old Testament are superseded by the truth of the New Testament, so too will the mysteries of the New Testament, which we must now celebrate in the same way, not be necessary in the resurrection.<sup>38</sup>

There are two Paschas, therefore, and the term "pascha" becomes, in this way, the name of the old and new human initiation in the divine mysteries. It is during the course of this process of initiation that Christ becomes himself incarnate, and he offers himself as sacrifice and consecrated victim in order to purify and consecrate humankind:

By this offering of himself (δι' ἧς προσφορᾶς αὐτοῦ καθαρίζεται πλανώμενος κόσμος εἰς ἐπιστροφὴν ἐρχόμενος) the world which has gone astray is purified and converted, and he *pacifies* all things *in the blood of his cross by putting to death hostility* (Eph 2:16), i.e., the *wrath* which leads to the destruction of *the desobedient* (Rom 2:8). For if they were eager to obey what was said in the ordinance, carrying out the ceremony with a *bunch of hyssop* (Exod 12:22), i.e., with a sacrificial fragrance of thoughts (ἀναθυμίασει ἐννοιῶν) on conversion, that was for them the realization of the true passover of Christ, who says: *For these I consecrate myself* (Ἀγιάζω ἑμαυτὸν ὑπὲρ τούτων), *and not for these alone but for all those who believe in you* (John 17:19–20).<sup>39</sup>

<sup>37</sup> *IP* 56: "may the heavens possess your spirit."

<sup>38</sup> Origen, *Peri Pascha* 32.20–25 (hereafter cited in text as *Pasch.*).

<sup>39</sup> *Pasch.* 47.11–21.

The stress consequently resides on the priestly dimension of the human being. Humans have to become consecrated because their final goal is to minister in heavens, and the essence of resurrected life is mystery celebration. In this exegetical context, Christ's economic work is both a celestial mystery of self-sacrifice and a pedagogical initiation into the heavenly mysteries. The highest mystery, according to Origen, is the mystery of eating the entrails of the Logos, which he equates with the mystery of the incarnation.<sup>40</sup>

There are two ways in which Origen, in his *Peri Pascha*, conceives of the Divine Anthropos in the figure of Christ, each of them related with one of the two parts of the tractate and the hermeneutical method practiced in its corresponding part. Since there are two Paschas, Origen divides his tractate in two sections. While the first one consists in a close interpretation of Exodus 12, a "word-by-word exegesis of the Passover (τῆς κατὰ λέξιν ἐξηγήσεως τῆς τοῦ πάσχα),"<sup>41</sup> the second unveils the "spiritual meaning (τὴν πνευματικὴν ἔννοιαν)" of the Pascha.<sup>42</sup> While the first is "historical," the second is "anagogical."<sup>43</sup>

The way Origen views the sacrifice and eating of Christ in the first part denotes an intellectual consumption of a human-like divine figure. Eating actually denotes interpreting Scripture and perceiving, in a noetic way, the manifestations of the Logos.<sup>44</sup> Origen continues: if the Logos-Christ is the lamb, the flesh of the Logos-Christ has to be the divine Scriptures.<sup>45</sup> The Alexandrian advises his audience that this interpretation has to be in the Spirit, because the flesh of the lamb has to be eaten roasted with fire, and, since the fire denotes the Spirit, they should be interpreted spiritually:

Therefore the Holy Spirit is rightly called *fire*, which it is necessary for us to receive in order to have converse with the *flesh* of Christ, I mean the divine Scriptures, so that, when we have roasted them with this divine *fire*, we may eat them roasted with fire.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> *Pasch.* 31.

<sup>41</sup> *Pasch.* 1.1.

<sup>42</sup> *Pasch.* 40.19.

<sup>43</sup> *Pasch.* 40.

<sup>44</sup> While describing the paschal eating of the Logos in his *Hom. Exod.* 7.8, Origen shows that, while the angels consume the flesh of the Logos at noon, humans can ingest it only during the evening, which is at the end of history (*in fine saeculi et ad uesperam mundi*; SC 321:230). In the morning, the exegete also avers, the Logos, who is the Sun of Righteousness, created his day.

<sup>45</sup> *Pasch.* 26.

<sup>46</sup> *Pasch.* 26.

Such an exegetical method assumes a special type of spiritual, noetic consumption of the flesh of Christ by means of the five noetic senses, one of Origen's most celebrated doctrines. Accordingly, perception through noetic senses follows the five days of preparation, which denote the catharsis of the five corporeal senses. It is Christ himself, however, who comes to each corporeal sense to purify it and secure its corresponding noetic function:

For there are five senses in the human being (πέντε γὰρ οὐσῶν αἰσθήσεων τῶν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου), unless Christ comes to each of them (εἰ μὴ ἐν ἑκάστη αὐτῶν γένηται Χριστός), He cannot be sacrificed and, after being roasted, be eaten. For it is when *he made clay with his spittle and anointed our eyes* (John 9:6–7) and made us *see clearly* (Mark 8:25), when He *opened the ears* (Mark 7:33–35) of our heart so that *heaving ears* we can *hear* (Matt 11:15; 13:19), when we smell his *good odor* (Eph 5:2; 2 Cor 1:15), recognizing that his name is a *perfume poured out* (Cant 1:13; Phil 2:7), and if, *having tasted*, we *see how good the Lord is* (1 Pet 2:3; Ps 34[33]:8), and if we touch him with the touch of which John speaks: *That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life* (1 John 1:1), then it is that we will be able to sacrifice the lamb and eat it and thus come out of Egypt.<sup>47</sup>

Subsequently, a similar passage occurs a few pages later in a discussion which no longer gravitates around the theme of the five senses, but around what the consumption of each part of Christ's body means. For Origen, the head is the divinity of Christ, eating his ears is hearing his words, eyes stand for clear seeing, consuming his hands refer to charitable work, the breast to the devoted or loyal believer, the entrails are the depths of God, the thighs represent chastity, while feet denote the running to Christ.<sup>48</sup>

The second part of the tractate inspects Christ's self-sacrifice through the lens of a more comprehensive, eschatological, and profound mystery. Here, the focus is on Christ's fight with Death, a theme analyzed in the second part of this study. In the hermeneutical context of this spiritual and allegorical interpretation, Origen unveils the meaning of what he considers the highest mystery as consisting in Christ's incarnation. But this includes the unseen dimension of a fighter who destroys Death while assuming the humiliation of passion and death, the self-offering, and consecration in order to consecrate those who follow him. Origen adopts the Pauline idea that the final goal of this sacrificial ritual is the reconciliation of the world

<sup>47</sup> *Pasch.* 18.10–25.

<sup>48</sup> *Pasch.* 30–31.

in Christ. "And he [the Father] did in Christ, as Scripture said: *For God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself* (2 Cor 5:19)."<sup>49</sup>

In conclusion, the figure of a Divine Anthropos, identified with Jesus, appears as well in Origen's paschal vision; though, he conceives of it differently from the other paschal authors. For Origen, Christ the Anthropos denotes either Christ's humanity or an allegorical-metaphorical reference to the Logos seen as a Divine Anthropos. The initiated Christian has to eat his spiritual or noetic limbs, which means that s/he has to perceive the Logos through the spiritual senses. This Anthropos comes at the end of the world as a Divine Warrior defeating Death, rescuing humans, and guiding them to the kingdom of his Father.

#### 4. METHIDIUS OF OLYMPUS

At the end of this first section, we must also mention the work of Methodius. On the one hand, his tractate on resurrection is not part of the paschal liturgical tradition, which the works of Melito, Pseudo-Hippolytus, and Origen witness to, and he never mentions Exodus 12 in his tractate. Rather, Methodius's text, *De resurrectione*, belongs to the tradition of defending the resurrection of the flesh through philosophical arguments in the line of Athenagoras and Tertullian. Relative to this and 'in good Pauline tradition,' yet unlike Athenagoras and Tertullian (in *De resurrectione carnis*), Methodius calls Jesus the Heavenly Anthropos, and talks about Jesus' body of glory which the apostles contemplated.

In his *Res.* 2.18.7 he identifies Divine Image and Heavenly Man:

Someone might think that the earthly image (εἰκόνα χοϊκῆν) is the same thing with the flesh (σάρκα) and the heavenly image (εἰκόνα ἐπουράνιον), to the contrary, is a spiritual body (σῶμα πνευματικόν) different from the flesh. But, first of all, we have to consider that Christ, the heavenly man (οὐράνιος ἄνθρωπος), when he appeared, was bearing the same form (σχῆμα), image, and flesh of the bodily members we have.<sup>50</sup>

This Heavenly Man was the original archetype according to which God created human beings as well as the model according to which human

<sup>49</sup> *Pasch.* 48.

<sup>50</sup> *Res.* 2.18.7. For the Greek text, see Nathanael Bonwetsch, *Methodius von Olympus*, GCS 27 (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1917), 231. If otherwise noted, all translations from Methodius are mine.



beings will be reconstructed after resurrection, when they will bear the image of the same Heavenly Man:

The image of the earthly [man] (εἰκὼν τοῦ χθιστοῦ) which we have born reflects the [biblical] *you are dust and to dust you shall return* (Gen 3:19), while the image of the heavenly (εἰκὼν τοῦ ἐπουρανοῦ) is the resurrection from the dead and the incorruptibility, so that *as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life* (Rom 6:4).<sup>51</sup>

Moreover, it seems that, for Methodius, Jesus' heavenly condition after resurrection is the same as his pre-incarnate condition; therefore, the Heavenly Anthropos is the same reality with his body of glory. Likewise, we can see in *Res.* 3.14.4 that prelapsarian human beings enjoyed a body of glory, and humans will also own a body of glory following their resurrection. The author asserts in *Res.* 3.14.1–3 that human beings will exchange their body of humiliation with a body of glory similar to Jesus'. Methodius also clearly states that the apostles were able to see this body of glory at the moment of Jesus' transfiguration, in a passage preserved only in Slavonic, in which he criticizes Origen for supporting the contrary opinion:

Wenn aber er [i.e., Origenes] nun entgegnet, aber ein anderes Wort sprechend: "Weil sie ihn nicht konnten sehen im Leib seiner Herrlichkeit, daher erschien er ihnen im Leibe der Niedrigkeit, wie sie im Stande waren (ihn) zu sehen."—2. Ein unmögliches Wort von ihm. Warum waren die Athleten im Stande in der Verklärung seine Herrlichkeit zu sehen, obwohl sie noch nicht durchaus vollkommen waren. ... 6. Wie nun, wenn sie nach Origenes nicht sehen konnten den Herrlichkeitsleib Christi? Wie konnten sie den noch Neulinge seines die Herrlichkeit seines Leibes sehen, aber als er ihnen kund tat, was er vom Vater gehört hatte, da konnten sie sein Antlitz nicht sehen?<sup>52</sup>

Finally, it is worth mentioning a passage presenting God's Image as the form which God uses to mark those creatures of the universe he fashions according to his Image. Here, of course, we are referring to both angels and humans. Regarding human beings, this image (εἰκὼν) or form (εἶδος) is not shaping only the human resurrected body but also the present body of humiliation and the form of the soul:

But from where comes the shape of the resurrection (σχῆμα τὸ ἀνιστάμενον) if this human form (ἀνθρωποειδές) will disappear completely, as he [i.e., Origen] finds it useless? Compared to all the other shapes (σχῆματα) of living beings, it is the most beautiful of them, since it is the image which the deity itself uses

<sup>51</sup> *Res.* 2.18.6.

<sup>52</sup> *Res.* 3.13.1–2. Trans. Bonwetsch, 269–270.

(τὸ θεῖον χρῆται εἰκότι)—as the most wise Paul shows, “For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory (εἰκὼν καὶ δόξα) of God (1 Cor 11:7)” —an image according to which are configured (διεκοσμήθησαν) even the noetic bodies of the angels (τὰ νοερὰ τῶν ἀγγέλων σώματα). Is it then a circle, a polygon, a cub, or a pyramid? Because, there are different kinds of shapes (σχήματα). However, this is not possible. Therefore, for what reason a shape resembling God (θεοεικελον σχῆμα)—even he [i.e., Origen] agrees that the soul and the body share the same form (ὁμοειδή)—should be rejected as less honorable and resurrect without feet and hands?<sup>53</sup>

Methodius, to this point, conceives of the Heavenly Man as Jesus’ pre-incarnate condition, a radiant divine being most plausibly not different (or not much different) from his body of glory.

## 5. CONCLUSION

There are some differences and commonalities in the ways the pre-Nicene paschal authors conceive of the Divine Anthropos. While the paschal vocabulary of Melito and Pseudo-Hippolytus echoes the early Jewish-Christian conception of a cosmic Christ who sustains the universe, Pseudo-Hippolytus clearly defines Jesus’ divine dimension as luminous, gigantic, and noetic. Thus, he is part of a trend which clearly translates the Divine Anthropos onto the noetic level, as we will later see in Justin, Irenaeus, or Clement. Varying from these presentations, Origen speculates allegorically on Christ as a Divine Anthropos (the spiritual Man), while Christians have to consume spiritually his metaphoric limbs in order to be purified, consecrated, and saved. The last of the authors examined in this first section, Methodius, equates Jesus with the Heavenly Anthropos, and presents his pre-incarnate condition most likely as a luminous divine status identical with his body of glory.

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<sup>53</sup> *Res.* 3.15.1.



## CHAPTER TWO

### THE ROOTS OF THE “DIVINE ANTHROPOS” TRADITION

#### A. THE SON OF MAN

##### 1. YAHWEH AS KING OF GLORY AND DIVINE WARRIOR

It is a common thought that the root of the idea of the Divine Anthropos resides in the anthropomorphic passages of the Hebrew Bible. Encountered from the Indus Valley to the Italian Peninsula, from the Greek islands to the cultures of the Nile, anthropomorphism was a momentous religious way of thinking for the ancient Near Eastern cultures, including Israel. Although anthropomorphism is not a universal feature of the Jewish sacred text, this antique religious view represents one of its frequent components.<sup>1</sup> There are also many scholars who defend the existence of an ancestral aniconism in Israel (either exclusive or in parallel with the anthropomorphite tendency), having its roots also in the ancient Near East.<sup>2</sup> Further, we can also see that,

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<sup>1</sup> For scholarship on biblical anthropomorphism, see for example Johannes Hempel, “Die Grenzen des Anthropomorphismus Jahwes im Alten Testament,” *ZAW* 57 (1939): 75–85; Frank Michaeli, *Dieu à l’image de l’homme: Étude de la notion anthropomorphique de Dieu dans l’Ancien Testament* (Neuchâtel: Delachaux, 1950); Edmond Jacob, *Théologie de l’Ancien Testament* (Neuchâtel: Delachaux, 1955); James Barr, “Theophany and Anthropomorphism in the Old Testament,” *VTSup.* 7 (1960): 31–38; Joachim Oelsner, *Benennung und Funktion der Körperteile im hebräischen Alten Testament* (PhD diss., Leipzig, 1960); Moshe Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic School* (Oxford: Oxford Clarendon Press, 1972), 191–209; Tryggve N.D. Mettinger, *The Dethronement of Sabaoth: Studies in the Shem and Kabod Theologies*, ConBOT 18 (Lund: Wallin & Dalholm, 1982); Marjo C.A. Korpel, *A Rift in the Clouds: Ugaritic and Hebrew Descriptions of the Divine* (Münster: UGARIT-Verlag, 1990), 87–590; Herbert Niehr, “In Search of YHWH’s Cult Statue in the First Temple,” in *The Image and the Book: Iconic Cults, Aniconism, and the Rise of Book Religion in Israel and the Ancient Near East*, ed. Karel van der Toorn (Leuven: Peeters, 1997), 73–96.

<sup>2</sup> See, e.g., Hans G. Kippenberg et al., eds., *Approaches to Iconology*, vols. 4–5 of *Visible Religion: Annual for Religious Iconography* (Leiden: Brill, 1985–1986); Walter Dietrich and Martin A. Klopfenstein, eds., *Ein Gott allein? JHWH-Verehrung und biblischer Monotheismus im Kontext der israelitischen und altorientalische Religionsgeschichte* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1994); Steven W. Holloway and Lowell K. Handy, eds., *The Pitcher Is Broken: Memorial Essays for Gösta W. Ahlström* (Sheffield, UK: Academic Press, 1995); Tryggve N.D.

in the Second Temple,<sup>3</sup> one may encounter the anthropomorphic position associated or even identified with the *kabod* tradition. In general terms, the synthesis reflects the conception of a divinity which likes to manifest to its people either as divine glory or as divine human-like image. To the contrary, the Bible and the Second Temple period also frequently associate the aniconic position with the tradition of the divine Name (*Shem*), a theological vision which prefers to think of God as unmanifested through visual realities but through his name or voice.

Paschal theology is mostly connected with the first trend. The main character of this typology, Jesus Christ, receives such divine titles as Divine Image, Heavenly Man, or King of Glory. The last two names are obviously inherited from the biblical descriptions of Yahweh as the King of Glory and the Warrior Savior.

Observing that the *kabod* was an essential mark of the divine presence, not only in the Temple of Jerusalem but also in various other instances related to various Exodus-Sinai-Wilderness experiences of ancient Israel, Carey C. Newman asserts that the origins of יהוה כבוד ostensibly evokes pre-monarchical times:

- (1) God's כבוד is instrumental in securing the release of the ancient Israelites from the Egyptians. (2) כבוד, as a signifier of divine presence, is linked with Sinai ... (3) In the Wilderness the appearance of יהוה כבוד signals judgment. (4) כבוד, both in and outside of "P," is intimately connected with wilderness forms of worship (Tent, Ark, Tabernacle).<sup>4</sup>

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Mettinger, *No Graven Image: Israelite Aniconism in Its Ancient Near Eastern Context*, ConBOT 42 (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1995); idem, "The Roots of Aniconism: An Israelite Phenomenon in Comparative Perspective," in *Congress Volume: Cambridge 1995*, ed. John A. Emerton, SVT 66 (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 219–234; Karel van der Toorn, ed., *The Image and the Book: Iconic Cults, Aniconism, and the Rise of Book Religion in Israel and the Ancient Near East* (Louvain: Peeters, 1997); Trygve N.D. Mettinger, "JHWH-Statue oder Anikonismus im ersten Tempel? Gespräch mit meinen Gegnern," *ZAW* 117, no. 4 (2005): 485–508; Yaira Amit et al., eds., *Essays on Ancient Israel in Its Near Eastern Context: A Tribute to Nadav Na'aman* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006). Mettinger, for instance, ponders that the Deuteronomistic school and Josianic reforms should be considered a "programmatically aniconism," and it should be distinguished from the "*de facto* aniconism," more tolerant, which characterized Israel's pre-exilic religious life.

<sup>3</sup> One may speculate that this, perhaps, may occur during the time of the late First Temple era, if one takes into account the Isaianic vision from Isa 6, which is usually dated around the 8–7 century BCE.

<sup>4</sup> Newman, *Paul's Glory-Christology*, 38–39. The origins of this expression remain obscure since, as Newman also observes, "[i]n Ras Shamra texts, כבוד is never collocated with Baal-Hadad, never appears in theophanic context, and has no semantic overlaps with יהוה כבוד."

Several other scholars have shown that *kabod* theology represents a main theoretical tool of the Priestly theological tradition and the Jerusalem Temple cult.<sup>5</sup> As such, it is commonly held that the image of a luminous God will remain a central element of Jewish literature from apocalyptic writings to Qumran literature and rabbinic mysticism.

Moreover, the key attributes of the paschal Jesus, as we will also see in the second part of the present study, are developed from Yahweh imagery. Thus, the expectation to see the divine glory, especially that of the eschatological Savior, the King of Glory (*Kabod Yahweh*), constituted a key aspect of both Jewish Passover and Christian paschal speculations. Paschal theology was, therefore, a *kabod* theology. Likewise, Jesus will be celebrated as High Priest and Lord of the Powers, a title developed from the divine name of Yahweh Sabaoth. The roots of the idea of Divine Image, associated with Jesus, may also be traced back to Yahweh's Image (*tselem*, used in Gen 1:26). We will also see that paschal theology envisions Christ as a mighty Warrior defeating Death, and thus portraying him in the manner the Bible used to depict Yahweh as a Divine Warrior, sometimes defeating Israel's enemies or the Sea/Death simply through the presence of his dazzling and unbearable glory. This imagery will be explored in depth in the second part of the study, when I aim to retrace the origins of the soteriological conception of a paschal hero who fought and defeated Death.

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Ibid., 38. However, the idea of divine luminosity is almost everywhere present in the ancient Near East and even beyond the boundaries of the ancient Near East, in the ancient Hindu, Greek, Germanic, and many other cultures. See, for instance, Mircea Eliade, *Patterns in Comparative Religion*, trans. Rosemary Sheed (London: Sheed and Ward, 1971), 124–153; or Idem, "Experiences of the Mystic Light," in his *Mephistopheles and the Androgynous: Studies in Religious Myth and Symbol*, trans. J.M. Cohen (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1965), 19–77.

<sup>5</sup> E.g., Gerhard von Rad, "Deuteronomy's 'Name' Theology and the Priestly Document's 'Kabod' Theology," *Studies in Deuteronomy*, SBT 9 (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1953), 37–44; Rolf Rendtorff, "The Concept of Revelation in Ancient Israel," in *Revelation as History*, eds. W. Pannenberg et al. (New York: MacMillan, 1968), 25–53; J.G. McConville, "God's 'Name' and God's 'Glory,'" *TynBul* 30 (1979): 149–163; Trygve N.D. Mettinger, *The Dethronement of Sabaoth: Studies in the Shem and Kabod Theologies* (Lund: CWK. Gleerup, 1982). See also Newman, *Paul's Glory-Christology*, for further bibliography.

## 2. THE ANCIENT OF DAYS, THE SON OF MAN, AND THEIR HUMAN LIKENESS

The roots of the Son of Man figure may be found in the Danielic hero called “One like the son of man” (כְּבֶר אִנְשׁ in Dan 7:13) and “One like the likeness of the sons of man” (כְּדַמוֹת בְּנֵי אָדָם in Dan 10:16), a second heavenly character after the Ancient of Days. This expression, the “Ancient of Days” (עֶתִיק יוֹמִין) lit. “One advanced in days”), is unique to the Hebrew Bible as presented in Daniel 7:9. Here, the author of Daniel denotes the utmost heavenly figure “enthroned in the assembly of the angels, analogous to an ancient king who is surrounded by his retinue.”<sup>6</sup> Portrayed in lines reminiscent of Ezekiel 1 and 10 as a quasi-anthropomorphic profile of resplendent brilliance, endowed with a wheeled throne generating a stream of flames, and presiding over the heavenly judgment, the character obviously denotes the God of Israel. With the exception of Jepheth ibn Ali (10th c.), who identified this heavenly figure with an angel, and Ibn Ezra (12th c.), who equated it with Michael, the other commentators have generally identified it with Yahweh.<sup>7</sup> What concerns this discussion, however, is the anthropomorphic depiction of this character:

I kept looking until thrones were set up, and the Ancient of Days took His seat; His vesture was like white snow and the hair of His head like pure wool. His throne was ablaze with flames, Its wheels were a burning fire. A river of fire was flowing and coming out from before Him; thousands upon thousands were attending Him, and myriads upon myriads were standing before Him; the court sat, and the books were opened.<sup>8</sup>

The narrative continues with a second human-like figure, called the “one like the son of man,” with no other name added to this description. A second divine figure is a rare element of the Hebrew Bible, most likely paralleled only by the enthroned Lady Wisdom of sapiential literature. Scholarly disagreement over the origin and meaning of this enigmatic character makes its case undeniably more difficult than that of the Ancient of Days. Several scholarly proposals concerning the origins of this second figure vary from Babylonian, Egyptian, Iranian, Hellenistic, Gnostic, and/or Ugaritic backgrounds to Hebrew internal developments.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>6</sup> See Arthur J. Ferch, *The Son of Man in Daniel Seven* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrew University Press, 1979), 150.

<sup>7</sup> André Lacocque, *Le Livre de Daniel*, CAT 15b (Neuchatel: Delachaux et Niestlé, 1976), 104.

<sup>8</sup> Dan 7:9–10.

<sup>9</sup> Ferch, *The Son of Man*, 105–106. For a detailed discussion, see Ferch's whole chapter 2 of his *The Son of Man*, 40–107.

Furthermore, the meaning of the description-name remains a matter of incessant debate. The Danielic portrait evinces the following undertones:

I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man (כְּבָר אֲנוֹשׁ; ὥς υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου) was coming, And He came up to the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him. And to Him was given dominion, glory and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations and men of every language might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away; and His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed.<sup>10</sup>

Several scholars have noted that the expression *ben 'adam* (“son of man”) involves three distinct meanings in Hebrew texts. In Jeremiah, Isaiah, Psalms, Numbers, Job, the Qumran Community Rule, and some other instances, its meaning is simply that of “man” or “human being.” This is an expression generally denoting someone’s human nature and fragile status before God.<sup>11</sup> In other texts, especially Ezekiel (recurring close to one hundred times), *1En.* 60:10, and *Apoc. El. (H)* 1:1, the expression denotes a special title, a sort of holy designation which God applies only to a particular kind of persons, namely, his prophets.<sup>12</sup>

The most remarkable use of this phrase appears in Daniel 10, in which *ben 'adam* designates a heavenly character who steps in front of the heavenly throne.<sup>13</sup> As in Ezekiel 1 and 10, the preposition “like” (כְּ; ὥς) emphasizes, at the same time, the effort of an accurate description and the awareness that this description remains inadequate in its goal of reflecting that heavenly reality.

In this review of the second figure, four elements are essential for our investigation.<sup>14</sup> First, he is not yet the Son of Man but “One like the son of man” and “One like the likeness of the sons of man.” Second, the character exhibits human-like traits. Third, since several divine attributes refer to this hero, it may represent a second divine figure or power in heaven.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Dan 7:13–14.

<sup>11</sup> E.g., Sabino Chialà, “The Son of Man: The Evolution of an Expression,” in *Enoch and the Messiah Son of God: Revisiting the Book of Parables*, ed. Gabriele Boccaccini (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, UK: Eerdmans, 2007), 153–178, esp. 155. See Jer 49:18, 33; 50:40; 51:53; Isa 51:12; 56:2; Pss 8:5; 80:18; 146:3; (cf. Ps 144:3); Num 23:19; Job 16:21; 25:6; 35:8; 1QS 11:20–21.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 155–156.

<sup>13</sup> As Ferch shows, the expression כְּבָר אֲנוֹשׁ, which “generally designates a specific member of the human race, should be translated by ‘one like a man,’ ‘one like a human being,’ ‘one who resembles a human being,’ or ‘one in human likeness’”; see Ferch, *The Son of Man*, 183.

<sup>14</sup> It is worth noting that Arthur J. Ferch demonstrates the first three elements, while Andrew Angels argues for the fourth.

<sup>15</sup> There are some attributes recalling the Ezekielean features of the enthroned divine



Fourth, the character may be regarded as a Divine Warrior because of certain narrative elements which unveil similarities with the famous scenario of the combat myth.<sup>16</sup>

Most likely deriving from his Divine Warrior status, the “One like the son of man” takes on important celestial functions. In particular, he receives dominion, glory, and kingship; yet, this Divine Warrior is also a savior expected to rescue his people.<sup>17</sup> These functions, along with the ontological status of a second glorious divinity, will represent constant features of any future Son of Man materials. We might add here, nonetheless, that the “One like the son of man” is not yet considered an eschatological judge.<sup>18</sup>

The distinction between “One like the son of man” and “Son of Man” is also of concern to us at this point. Here, I agree with Sabino Chialà, who argues for a distinction between Daniel’s vague designation “One like the

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figure from Ezek 1:26–28, including the same language of imprecision in Ezek 1:26: “a figure like that of a man” (דמות כמרצה אדם; ὁμοίωμα ὡς εἶδος ἀνθρώπου). Several scholars have seen in this figure more than an angelic being, a figure enjoying divine attributes: Ferch sees it as a celestial being higher than an angel and lower than the Ancient of Days (cf. Ferch, *The Son of Man*, 174). Andrew Angels argues that it is not an angel, and “it is hard to conceive of what other sort of celestial being he might be;” cf. Angels, *Chaos and the Son of Man: The Hebrew Chaoskampf Tradition in the Period 515 BCE to 200 CE* (London: T&T Clark, 2006), 106. Angels explains on the same page that the Son of Man cannot be an angelic figure as several scholars proposed—e.g., Nathaniel Schmidt, “The Son of Man’ in the Book of Daniel,” *JBL* 19 (1900): 22–28; J.A. Emerton, “The Origin of the Son of Man Imagery,” *JTS* 9 (1958): 225–242; esp. 238–242; John Day, *God’s Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea: Echoes of a Canaanite Myth in the Old Testament* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 1985), 167–177—since the “rider of the clouds” denotes an ancient Near Eastern divine title. Cf. Ferch, *The Son of Man*, 171, for the image of the theophanic cloud, and also 174: “Indeed, the manlike being is depicted with divine attributes, while at the same time accepting a subordinate role in the presence of the Ancient of Days.” Cf. Maurice Casey, *Son of Man: The Interpretation and Influence of Daniel 7* (London: SPCK, 1979); idem, *The Solution to the ‘Son of Man’ Problem* (London: T & T Clark, 2007).

<sup>16</sup> See for instance Angels, *Chaos*, 99–114.

<sup>17</sup> Nevertheless, in Dan 7:26—the verse which describes the destruction of the last king who suppressed the saints of the Most High (possibly the one like the son of man, as Dan 7:22 seems to distinguish the Ancient of Days from the Most High)—is not clear enough which of the two divine characters is the author of this destruction: “But the court will sit, and his power will be taken away and completely destroyed forever.” According to the internal logic of the combat myth, however, it is expected that the Divine Warrior figure (therefore the one like the son of man) would fight, destroy the evil enemy, and save his divine people or human subjects. See Richard J. Clifford, “Cosmogonies in the Ugaritic Texts and in the Bible,” *Or.* 53, no. 2 (1984): 183–201; idem, *Creation Accounts in the Ancient Near East and in the Bible* (Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association, 1994), 82–93.

<sup>18</sup> Ferch, *The Son of Man*, 177: “The Danielic figure is never described as judge or one who is judged.”

son of man” and the clearly articulated title “Son of Man.” Although highly indebted to Daniel 7 and 10, the Son of Man figure occurs for the first time in the Enochic *Book of Parables* (1 *En.* 46–48), a text most likely produced in the first century CE. The passage implies a considerable linguistic and theoretical evolution from an ill-defined expression intending to suggest a human-like similarity to a proper name and well-contoured second divine character:<sup>19</sup>

There I saw one who had a head of days, and his head was like white wool. And with him was another, whose face was like the appearance of a man; and his face was full of graciousness like one of the holy angels. And I asked the angel of peace, who went with me and showed me all the hidden things, about that son of man (*walda sab'*)—who he was and whence he was (and) why he went with the Head of Days. And he answered me and said to me, “This is the son of man (*walda sab'*) who has righteousness ...”<sup>20</sup>

The following verses of the text depict the Son of Man fighting evil and unjust people in the way a real Divine Warrior would fight to save his peers. Undoubtedly, the text preserves the salvific function from the way the prophetic books used to describe Yahweh.<sup>21</sup> It is also in the *Book of Parables* that, for the first time in Jewish literature, God transfers his function of judge to a different character. This exchange strongly underlines the importance of the newly emerged figure of the Son of Man. It is an action that is never done in Daniel and, on a larger scale, never conducted within the Hebrew Bible.<sup>22</sup>

Scholars have also made the observation that the first century CE witnesses the emergence of the Son of Man figure not only in 1 *Enoch* but also in many other classical materials: the Gospels, Acts of the Apostles, Revelation 1 and 14, 2 (*Syriac*) *Baruch*, and 4 *Ezra* 13.<sup>23</sup> Frequently, in these texts, the essential attributes of the Son of Man consist of a glorious human likeness possessing such functions as Savior, Judge, and Divine Warrior. In Christian

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<sup>19</sup> Angels, *Chaos*, 159–163. Nickelsburg and Vanderkam date the *Book of Parables* “some-time around the turn of the era;” see George W.E. Nickelsburg and James C. Vanderkam, 1 *Enoch: A New Translation based on the Hermeneia Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004), 6.

<sup>20</sup> 1 *En.* 46:1–3.

<sup>21</sup> E.g., 1 *En.* 48:7: “For in his name they are saved, and he is the vindicator of their lives.”

<sup>22</sup> Chialà, “The Son of Man,” 161. Cf. John J. Collins, “The Son of Man in First-Century Judaism,” *NTS* 36 (1992): 448–466.

<sup>23</sup> See Collins, “The Son of Man,” and Chialà, “The Son of Man.” For a detailed discussion of the Danielic influence in early Jewish and Christian literature, see Benjamin E. Reynolds, *The Apocalyptic Son of Man in the Gospel of John*, WUNT 2/249 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008).

materials, these divine titles and functions are obviously associated with Jesus Christ, and represent, as well, essential features through which Christian documents, from Paul to the paschal writings of Melito, Pseudo-Hippolytus, and Origen, depict their main hero, Jesus Christ. It is for this reason that the emergence of the Son of Man figure in the first century CE—well equipped with several proper divine functions—has to be mentioned in a christological discussion on paschal writings.

### B. THE ARCHETYPAL ANTHROPOS

The first century CE also developed a second intellectual trend of essential influence for the way the pre-Nicene paschal writings will conceive of the divine dimension of Jesus Christ. This additional trend concerns one of the most intriguing themes of Late Antiquity, usually called the Divine Anthropos or the Heavenly Anthropos (i.e., Greek for “human being”). I am suggesting that, unlike the Son of Man, the ontological status and the functions of the Divine Anthropos vary from one document to another. Due to this broad variety, it is necessary to distinguish between the many Heavenly Anthropos characters in order to discover whether paschal texts followed a particular model or elaborated their own paradigm.

To this point, numerous scholars have previously analyzed this theme, and their investigations have led to an array of positions regarding the origin of this idea; of particular interest are always the Hermetic and Gnostic elaborations of the Heavenly Anthropos figure. The *religionsgeschichtliche Schule*, flourishing at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, pondered that the origin of this character could be traced back to Iranian mythology. In this particular pantheon, the mythic figure “Gayomart” is mentioned among the first.<sup>24</sup> Despite such hypothesis, scholars in the latter half of the twentieth century revised this position and ascribed the origins to the ancient Jewish biblical and extra-biblical traditions.<sup>25</sup> The trend is now well known as the ‘new school’ of the history of religions.

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<sup>24</sup> E.g., Richard Reitzenstein, *Poimandres: Studien zur griechisch-ägyptischen und frühchristlichen Literatur* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1904); Wilhelm Bousset, *Hauptprobleme der Gnosis* (1907; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1973); Reitzenstein, *Das iranische Erlösungsmysterium*; Joachim Jeremias, “Adam,” *TWNT* 1 (1933); Wiedengren, *The Great Vohu Manah*; Heinrich Schlier, *Die Zeit der Kirche: Exegetische Aufsätze und Vorträge* (Freiburg: Herder, 1956); Rudolph Bultmann, “Adam und Christus nach Römer 5,” *ZNW* 50 (1959): 145–165.

<sup>25</sup> Colpe, *Die religionsgeschichtliche Schule*; idem, “ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου;” Schenke, *Der Gott*

In my opinion, this second position, too, needs some further refinement. It should be pointed out that a careful inspection concludes that the extant materials do not present a unique Heavenly Anthropos figure regarding his functions and ontological status. Such varied figures as the Son of Man in *1 Enoch* 48 and 62 as well as the multifaceted types of anthropomorphic characters found in *2 Enoch* 30, Philo, *Testament of Abraham* 11–13, *Pesikta Rabbati* 48, and the Hermetic, Gnostic, *Shi'ur Qomah*, and Kabbala materials cannot be placed under the same umbrella.<sup>26</sup> Moreover, there is no reason to exclude from the list such anthropomorphic figures as the New Testament Son of Man and the two Pauline ideas of Heavenly Man and Form of God. Although all these documents describe a heavenly anthropomorphic character or, sometimes, merely an anthropomorphic form, their denoted entities fluctuate very much in terms of nature, ontological status, and functions ascribed to each character. If some texts describe the Son of Man, other materials portray a primordial luminous or angelic Adam, while others a mere abstract human form of the noetic realm. While their ontological status can vary from divine or angelic figures to noetic paradigms, the functions and roles they play in creation and/or the history of salvation are also very diverse. A new perspective should distinguish, therefore, among these anthropomorphic figures, their categories, and, whenever possible, their historical evolutions as well as the narratives and the theological and philosophical arguments in which they were involved.

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"Mensch"; idem, "Die neutestamentische Christologie und der gnostische Erlöser," in *Gnosis und Neues Testament*, ed. Karl-Wolfgang Tröger (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1973), 205–229; Gilles Quispel, "Der gnostische Anthropos und die jüdische Tradition," *Erjb* 22 (1953): 195–234; Birger A. Pearson, *The Pneumatikos-Psychikos Terminology in 1 Corinthians*, SBLDS 12 (Misoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1973); Michel Tardieu, *Trois mythes gnostiques: Adam, Éros et les animaux d'Égypte dans un écrit de Nag Hammadi (II,5)* (Paris: Études augustiniennes, 1974), 86–139; Alan F. Segal, *Two Powers in Heaven: Early Rabbinic Reports about Christianity and Gnosticism* (Leiden: Brill, 1977); Fischer, "Adam und Christus;" Charles K. Barrett, "The Significance of the Adam-Christ Typology for the Resurrection of the Dead," in *Résurrection du Christ et des chrétiens (I Co 15)*, ed. Lorenzo De Lorenzi (Rome: Abbaye de S. Paul, 1985), 99–122; Jarl E. Fossum, *The Name of God and the Angel of the Lord: Samaritan and Jewish Concepts of Intermediation and the Origin of Gnosticism* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1985); idem, *The Image of the Invisible God: Essays on the Influence of Jewish Mysticism on Early Christology* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1995).

<sup>26</sup> This methodology was uncritically used not only by the representatives of the *religionsgeschichtliche Schule* but also by some key representatives of the new school, e.g., Gilles Quispel, "Ezekiel 1:26 in Jewish Mysticism and Gnosis," *VC* 34 (1980): 1–13; Guy G. Stroumsa, "Form(s) of God: Some Notes on Meṭaṭron and Christ," *HTR* 76, no. 3 (1983): 269–288; Jarl Fossum, "The Heavenly Man," in his *Name of God*, 266–291.

At the end of discussion, the question raised is, “What is common in such distinct conceptions about the Heavenly Man as Philo’s notions of noetic anthropos and Anthropos-Logos, the Pauline Heavenly Anthropos, the Hermetic Anthropos, or the Gnostic Adam/Adamas?” I argue that the only feature shared by all these documents is merely the general idea of human-like form. However, its functions and ontological status differ from one text to the other.

I also submit that we can discern between two distinct trajectories in all these materials. First, we may observe that several texts—Ezekiel 28, the Dead Sea Scrolls, the *Testament of Abraham*, and a number of the mystical Christian and rabbinic texts of Late Antiquity through the Middle Ages (e.g., the hekhaloth literature), to name a few—advance an exalted prelapsarian Adam, namely, the human earthly figure of Gen 2:7 exalted to the condition of a luminous being.<sup>27</sup> This trend creates a narrative with a single Adam or Anthropos, a unique human-like figure.

Second, the other group of texts—those of Philo, Paul, the Hermetic Corpus, Gnostic texts, and early paschal materials—create a narrative with two anthropomorphic figures engaged in a speculative Platonic game. This activity, so to speak, relates to a “paradigm vs. copy” motif, where the first term is a heavenly Image and a celestial model of the second one, the first-formed Adam. This trajectory usually hypostasizes the Divine Image into a divine character and ascribes him demiurgic, or even soteriological, functions.

Nevertheless, the confusion between the two trajectories inevitably starts when authors such as Philo and Paul begin to call the Divine Image “Adam” or “Anthropos”. We must note, however, that *this* heavenly Adam is not the empirical and historical protopater but the eternal Image which God employed as model to create the empirical Adam. From a hermeneutical point of view, each of the Heavenly Adam/Anthropos elaborations of the second model reflects a particular speculation on the theme of Divine Image and a special interpretative vision of Gen 1:27. This trend always makes the distinction between, at least, one Archetypal Adam, who is the Divine Image, and the historical Adam. Further, this trend strives to actually iden-

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<sup>27</sup> This first trajectory also comes out in various documents preserving the Jewish tradition according to which the angels of heaven were commanded at the beginning of time to worship Adam, the image of God; e.g., 2 *En.* 22; *Vita* 15–16; Heb 1:6; *Gos. Bart.* 4:52–60; *Sib. Or.* 8:442–445; *Rab.* 8:10; *Eccl. Rab.* 6:9:1; *Rab.* 24E; *Pirqe R. El.* 11–12; *Apoc. Sedr.* 5:1–2; 3 (*Slav*) *Bar; Conflict of Adam and Eve* 7.

tify *who* or *what* that Divine Image is. In essence, this second trajectory creates a narrative strategy which constantly upholds that the empirical Adam is a mere copy of a heavenly archetype.

### 1. THE LUMINOUS ADAM OF SECOND TEMPLE LITERATURE

Referring to the aforementioned first paradigm, I offer a survey of the various pieces of literature illustrating early glorifications of Adam. I will begin my inquiry with Ezek 28:12–17, a text which alludes, by way of analogy and metaphor, to an Adam peculiarly portrayed along glorious lines. The passage reads:

Son of man, take up a lamentation over the king of Tyre and say to him, “Thus says the Lord GOD, “You had the seal of perfection (חֹתֶם תְּכֵנִית), full of wisdom and perfect in beauty (וּכְלִיל יָפִי). You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering: the ruby, the topaz and the diamond; the beryl, the onyx and the jasper; the lapis lazuli, the turquoise and the emerald; and the gold, the workmanship of your settings and sockets, was in you. On the day that you were created they were prepared. You were the anointed cherub who covers, and I placed you there. You were on the holy mountain of God; you walked in the midst of the stones of fire. You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created until unrighteousness was found in you. By the abundance of your trade you were internally filled with violence, and you sinned; therefore I have cast you as profane from the mountain of God. And I have destroyed you, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty (בִּיפִיךָ); you corrupted your wisdom by reason of your splendor (יַפְעַתְךָ).”<sup>28</sup>

Most likely, the text represents one of the most ancient sources—if not *the* most ancient one—for the tradition which exalts the prelapsarian Adam. In spite of the fact that the account starts with a description of the king of Tyre, the narrative structure changes to a context—namely, Paradise—in which it is almost impossible to place this royal character. Hence, it would be more logical here to associate the Garden of Eden with Adam. The result would be the first text portraying Adam as a highly exalted figure which God places on his holy mountain and arrays with beauty, splendor, and precious stones.

<sup>28</sup> See also Dexter E. Callender, “The Primal Man in Ezekiel and the Image of God,” *SBLSP* (1998): 606–625, who argues that the MT term *hôtēm toknît* from verse 12 of this passage should be emended to *hôtām tabnît* (seal of likeness, seal of resemblance), an expression which is equivalent to the *šelem* and *dēmûth* of Gen 1:26.

Several of the Dead Sea texts inspired Crispin H.T. Fletcher-Louis to argue for the thesis that the Qumran community believed that Adam's prelapsarian condition was luminous and quasi-angelic.<sup>29</sup> Thus, already in the second century BCE, the Dead Sea manuscripts testify to the circulation of the idea that Adam's original condition was glorious and angelic, if one takes into account the text of the *Words of the Heavenly Lights*.<sup>30</sup> A portion of the text (fragment 8, recto of 4Q504), for example, reads: "[... Adam,] our [fat]her, you fashioned in the image of [your] glory ([...] כבוד בדרמות יצרתה כה [...]) [...] [...] the breath of life] you [b]lew into his nostril, and intelligence and knowledge."<sup>31</sup> Similarly, one should take note of the two anthropologies of Gen 1:27 and 2:7 which have already been synthesized at this time. The image of the glorious Adam is also present in the *Community Rule*, usually dated around 100 BCE: "For those God has chosen for an everlasting covenant and to them shall belong all the glory of Adam (וכל כבוד אדם)."<sup>32</sup> To this point, Fletcher-Louis finds a similar expression in the *Damascus Document*, a text emerging during the same period. The *Document*, in part, reads: "Those who remained steadfast in it will acquire eternal life, and all the glory of Adam (וכל כבוד אדם) is for them."<sup>33</sup>

Two other texts significant for this discussion are the *Life of Adam and Eve* and its Greek version, *The Apocalypse of Moses*. In particular, the passage *Apoc. Mos.* 20–21 illustrates the aforementioned tradition:

And I [Eve] wept saying, "Why have you done this to me, that I have been estranged from my glory (ἀπηλλοτριώθηγν ἐκ τῆς δόξης μου) with which I was clothed (ἤμην ἐνδεδυμένη)?" ... And when your father came, I [Eve] spoke to him unlawful words of transgression such as brought us down from great glory (κατήγαγον ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ μεγάλης δόξης). ... "Come, my lord Adam, listen to me and eat of the fruit of the tree of which God told us not to eat from it, and you shall be as God (ὡς θεός; cf. LXX)." ... [Adam to Eve:]

<sup>29</sup> See Crispin H.T. Fletcher-Louis, *All the Glory of Adam: Liturgical Anthropology in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, STDJ 42 (Leiden: Brill, 2002), esp. 88–135.

<sup>30</sup> 4QDibHam (4Q504, 506). The earliest copy is paleographically dated around 150 BC (DJD 7:137). Cf. Ester G. Chazon, "Is *Divrei Ha-me'orot* a Sectarian Prayer?" in *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Forty Years of Research*, eds. Devorah Dimant and Uriel Rappaport, STDJ 10 (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 1–17; Daniel K. Falk, "Qumran Prayer Texts and the Temple," in *Sapiential, Liturgical and Poetical Texts from Qumran*, eds. Daniel K. Falk et al., STDJ 35 (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 106–126.

<sup>31</sup> 4Q504 i 4–5, in Florentino García Martínez and Eibert J.C. Tigchelaar, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 1008–1009.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 1QS iv 22–23, 78–79.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, CD iii (= 4Q269 2) 20, 554–555.

“You have estranged me from the glory of God (ἀπηλλοτριώσας με ἐκ τῆς δόξης τοῦ θεοῦ χριστοῦ).”<sup>34</sup>

The text here portrays Adam as a quasi-angelic being endowed from the first moment of his creation with a special status: that of bearing the glory of God.<sup>35</sup>

In the same line of thought, 2 (*Slavonic*) *Enoch* depicts Adam as an angelic glorious being of gigantic size:

And on the earth I assigned him to be a second angel (ἀγγελία β'όρατος), honored and great and glorious (εὐκλειά). And I assigned him to be a king (ὀβ'β'), to reign on the earth, and to have my wisdom. And there was nothing comparable to him on the earth, even among my creatures that exist. And I assigned to him a name from the four components: from East—(A), from West—(D), from North—(A), from South—(M).<sup>36</sup>

Andrei A. Orlov has already noticed that the four cardinal points mentioned in this text refer to Adam's gigantic dimensions.<sup>37</sup> The author intends thus

<sup>34</sup> *Apoc. Mos.* 20–21; in Johannes Tromp, *The Life of Adam and Eve in Greek: A Critical Edition*, PVTG 6 (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 144–146. For the English translation, see M.D. Johnson, *OTP* 2:281. De Jonge and Tromp consider the Greek life as the earliest form of all the five versions: Marinus de Jonge and Johannes Tromp, *The Life of Adam and Eve and Related Literature* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 11. The idea that the fall actually represented the loss of glorious garments recurs only in the Armenian version, [44](20): “At that hour I learned with my eyes that I was naked of the glory with which I had been clothed.” See Gary A. Anderson and Michael E. Stone, *A Synopsis of the Books of Adam and Eve*, SBLEJL 5 (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 1999), 46–47. For literature on the *Life of Adam and Eve* (*LAE*), see e.g., Michael Stone, *Armenian Apocrypha Relating to Adam and Eve* (Leiden: Brill, 1996); Gary Anderson, Michael Stone and Johannes Tromp, *Literature on Adam and Eve: Collected Essays*, SVTP 15 (Leiden: Brill, 2000); John R. Levison, *Texts in Transition: The Greek Life of Adam and Eve* (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000).

<sup>35</sup> See *Vita* 14–15. For the idea that Adam functioned as Yahweh's statue or icon for the angels, see e.g. Gary Anderson, “The Exaltation of Adam and the Fall of Satan,” in *Literature on Adam and Eve: Collected Essays*, eds. Gary Anderson et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 83–110; Peter Schäfer, *Rivalität zwischen Engeln und Menschen: Untersuchungen zur Rabbinischen Engelvorstellung* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1975); Joseph P. Schultz, “Angelic Opposition to the Ascension of Moses and the Revelation of the Law,” *JQR* 61 (1970/1971) 282–307; Arthur Marmorstein, “Controversies Between the Angels and the Creator,” *Melilah* 3–4 (1950) 93–102 (in Hebrew). While in *Vita* 15–16 and *Apoc. Sedr.* 5 the angels of heaven are commanded to worship the image of God in Adam, 3 *Bar Gr* 4:16 mentions Adam's garments of glory, while *Apoc. Sedr.* 7:7 affirms that Adam had the luminosity of the sun.

<sup>36</sup> 2 *En* [J] 30:11–13 (Sokolov 11:60–64, p. 30; in M.I. Sokolov, “Materialy i zametki po starinnoi slavyanskoi literature,” Vyp. 3, VII: *Slavyanskaya kniga Enokha: Tekst' s' latinskim' perevodom'*, in *Chtenia v' obshchestve istorii i drevnostei Rossiiskikh* [COIDR] 4 [1899], 1–80). Trans. F.I. Andersen, *OTP* 1:152.

<sup>37</sup> See, for instance, Andrei A. Orlov, “‘Without Measure and without Analogy:’ Shiur Qomah Traditions in 2 (*Slavonic*) *Enoch*,” *JJS* 56 (2005): 224–244, esp. 231.



to ascribe a divine stature to the protopater. It is worth mentioning here that the same connection between the cardinal points and Adam's gigantic dimensions is already present in the third book of the *Sibylline Oracles*, in a fragment which might date from the second century BCE: "Indeed it is God himself who fashioned Adam, of four letters, the first-formed man, fulfilling by his name east and west and south and north."<sup>38</sup>

Subsequently, our attention turns to *The Testament of Abraham*, a Jewish text of the first or second century CE which recalls a similar tradition of the primordial luminous Adam. It is worth mentioning here that the text creates the portrait of the most exalted Adam in Second Temple literature. In the shorter version of the testament, the patriarch Isaac has the following vision of an enigmatic figure:

And Isaac answered his father, "I saw the sun and the moon in my dream. And there was a crown upon my head, and there was an enormous man (ἀνήρ παμμεγέθης), shining exceedingly from heaven (λίαν λάμπων ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ), as (the) light which is called father of light (ὡς φῶς, καλούμενος πατήρ τοῦ φωτός). ... And that radiant man (ὁ φωτεινὸς ἀνήρ) .... When the radiant man (ὁ φωτεινὸς ἀνθρώπος) ...."<sup>39</sup>

The text, therefore, proclaims the existence of a heavenly luminous Anthropos of enormous dimensions and called the "father of light." The story continues with Archangel Michael taking this time Abraham to heaven and letting him contemplate the radiant Man. Moreover, the Archangel even unveils the identity of this enigmatic character: he is the first-formed Adam. The longer version portrays the radiant Man in similar lines:

And while I was thus watching and exulting at these things, I saw heaven opened, and I saw a light-bearing man (ἄνδρα φωτοφόρον) coming down out of

<sup>38</sup> *Sib. Or.* 3:24–26. Trans. John J. Collins, *OTP* 1:362. Collins avers that verses 1–45 of the third book might be produced in the Egyptian Jewish context of the second century BCE (*ibid.*, 1:360).

<sup>39</sup> *T. Ab.* [B] 7:5–14 (Francis Schmidt, *Le Testament grec d'Abraham*, TSAJ 11 [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1986], 60–62). For the English translation, see E.P. Sanders, in *OTP* 1:898. Cf. Dale Allison, Jr., *The Testament of Abraham* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2003). The same idea can be seen in the Slavonic text (*T. Ab.* 7:5–14), as one can see in D.S. Cooper's and H.B. Weber's translation, "The Church Slavonic Testament of Abraham," in *Studies on the Testament of Abraham*, ed. George W.E. Nickelsburg (Missoula, MN: Scholars Press, 1976), 310–326, esp. 316–318. Likewise, the Coptic text (*T. Ab.* 8), in G. MacRae's translation, "The Coptic Testament of Abraham," in Nickelsburg, *Studies on the Testament of Abraham*, 327–338, esp. 335. For the Romanian text, see Nicolae Roddy, *The Romanian Version of the Testament of Abraham: Text, Translation, and Cultural Context*, EJL 19 (Atlanta, GA: SBL, 2001). For the Bohairic, Ethiopic, and Arabic versions translated into French, see Mathias Delcor, *Le Testament d'Abraham* (Leiden: Brill, 1973), 216 (*T. Ab.* 5; Ethiopic). Cf. Michael Stone, *The Testament of Abraham: The Greek Recensions* (New York: SBL, 1972).

heaven (ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ κατελθόντα), flashing (beams of light) more than seven suns. And the sunlike man (ἄνῆρ ὁ ἠλιόμορφος) .... And the light-bearing man who came down from heaven, this is the one sent from God, who is about to take your righteous soul from you.<sup>40</sup>

Unlike Isaac, who has the vision of the Heavenly Man in an oneiric condition and contemplates him descending, Abraham ascends to heaven and contemplates the protopater on his own throne. It is there, in front of the throne, that Michael discloses Adam’s identity to Abraham:

And between the two gates there sat a man (ἄνῆρ) upon a throne of great glory (ἐπὶ θρόνου δόξης μεγάλῃς). And a multitude of angels encircled him. ... These are the (gates) which lead to life and to destruction, and this man (ἄνῆρ) who is sitting between them, this is Adam, the first man whom God formed (ὁ πρῶτος ἄνθρωπος ὃν ἔπλασεν ὁ θεός).<sup>41</sup>

However, this exulted Adam is not the Divine Image but the Adam of Gen 2:7, since the verb πλάσσω is used only there (ἔπλασεν ὁ θεός τὸν ἄνθρωπον) and not in Gen 1:27. Moreover, the *Eikon* or *tselem* language of Gen 1:27 does not come out in this material. Unlike the Adam of 2*Enoch*, the Adam depicted here is a heavenly being, enjoying a heavenly status not far from those of the Heavenly Men described by Philo, Paul, or the Gnostics. Nevertheless, he is not eternal and divine, as the Divine Image most likely is, always being associated with God. Yet, he is described as the first man, whom God created in heaven and adorned with a luminous angelic countenance. Unlike the angels, the first Adam enjoys a divine throne where he resides surrounded by angels, an imagery possibly suggesting that the protopater had a higher status than the angelic one.

<sup>40</sup> *T. Ab.* [A] 7:3–8.

<sup>41</sup> *T. Ab.* [B] 8:5–12. Cf. *T. Ab.* [A] 11:4–9: “And the appearance of that man was terrifying (ιδέα τοῦ ἀνδρὸς ἐκείνου φοβερά), like the Master’s (ὁμοία τοῦ δεσπότη). ... Then Abraham asked the Commander-in-chief (ἀρχιστράτηγον), ‘My lord Commander-in-chief, who is this most wondrous man (ὁ ἀνῆρ ὁ πανθαύμαστος), who is adorned in such glory (ὁ ἐν τοιαύτῃ δόξῃ κοσμούμενος), and sometimes he cries and wails while other times he rejoices and exults?’ The incorporeal one (ἀσώματος or ἀρχιστράτηγος) said, ‘This is the first-formed Adam (ὁ πρωτόπλαστος Ἀδάμ) who is in such glory (κάθεται ὡς ἐν τῇ αὐτοῦ δόξῃ), and he looks at the world, since everyone has come from him.’” It is worth mentioning that two manuscripts (I-Ankara and G-Istanbul) have ιδέα τοῦ ἀνθρώπου instead of ιδέα τοῦ ἀνδρὸς (cf. Schmidt, *Testament*, 129). The fact is highly remarkable as it recalls even more powerfully the Ezekielian model of the text, namely, LXX Ezek 1:26: ὁμοίωμα ὡς εἶδος ἀνθρώπου. All versions include, as well, a second luminous character to whom God entrusted the final judgment. While this character is Abel in Greek, Slavonic, and Romanian versions, the Coptic, Ethiopic, and Arabic have Enoch as the emblem of divine justice.

## 2. PHILO AND THE INVENTION OF THE TWO ADAMS

A. *Philo's Logos-Anthropos*

In contrast to the first model, the second trajectory of the Heavenly Anthropos theme witnesses a different development. The character is not the product of exaltation but of a process of hypostasizing the Divine Image of Gen 1:27. While the first one was an exalted human, the second is usually divine and frequently called even “god.” Several times, Philo of Alexandria himself identifies God’s Divine Image with the divine Logos. In addition, at least in two instances, Philo defines the Logos as Anthropos. In either case, the Logos is called Anthropos in connection with his Father and lacks any association with Adam:

How should you not hate war and love peace—you who have enrolled yourselves as children of one and the same Father, who is not mortal but immortal—God’s man (ἄνθρωπον θεοῦ), who, being the Word of the Eternal (τοῦ αἰδίου λόγος) must needs himself be imperishable?<sup>42</sup>

Within the same text, a different passage describes the Logos through a new series of attributes, God’s Image and Anthropos being among them. Here the text reads: “And many names are his, for he is called ‘the Beginning’ (ἀρχή), and the Name of God (ὄνομα θεοῦ), and His Word, and Man after His Image (ὁ κατ’ εἰκόνα ἄνθρωπος), and he that sees (ὁ ὁρῶν), that is, Israel.”<sup>43</sup> Again, there

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<sup>42</sup> *Conf.* 41. For the Greek text and English translation, see F.H. Colson et al. *Philo*, 10 vols. and 2 suppl. vols. (Loeb Classical Library [abbreviated LCL]; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1949–1956), here LCL Philo 4:32.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 146 (LCL Philo 4:144–147). I am also inclined to see a discourse about the Logos in the following ambiguous passage, which might be either about the Logos or about Adam, namely, *Conf.* 62–63 (LCL Philo 4:44–45): “I have heard also an oracle from the lips of one of the disciples of Moses, which runs thus: ‘Behold a man (ἄνθρωπος) whose name is the rising (ἀνατολή)’ (Zech 6:12), strangest of titles, surely, if you suppose that a being composed of soul and body is here described. But if you suppose that it is that Incorporeal one (τὸν ἀσώματον), who differs not a whit from the Divine Image (θείας εἰκόνας), you will agree that the name of ‘rising (ἀνατολή)’ assigned to him quite truly describes him. For that man (τοῦτον) is the eldest son (πρεσβύτατον υἱόν), whom the Father of all raised up, and elsewhere calls him His first-born, and indeed the Son thus begotten followed (μιμούμενος) the ways of his Father, and shaped the different kinds (ἐμόρφον τὰ εἶδη), looking to the archetypal patterns (παραδείγματα ἀρχέτυπα) which the Father supplied.” The text seems to ascribe to the Logos the capacity of fashioning the ideas according to the paradigms the Father previously created. These εἶδη may primarily refer to the noetic world which is located within the Logos, but one may also presume that they refer to the species of the things belonging to the visible universe. Likewise, such titles as the “son of God” and the “first-born of God” may constitute into a supplementary argument for the idea that the whole passage is one about the Logos and not about Adam.

is no connection with the earthly Adam in this sentence, but there is a direct tie to Gen 1:27 and the idea of Divine Image.

The Philonian Logos is more than a lofty idea or abstraction situated somewhere in the noetic world or in the mind of God. The texts present the Logos rather as a substantial, hypostasized reality. While such titles as “son [of God],” “angel,” and “second god” make us think of the Logos as a sort of heavenly or divine character, the title *πύρ τεχνικόν*, the Demiurgic Fire, discloses an entity of pneumatic nature. In his review of this ‘nature,’ John Dillon suggests that such a title should not be taken as mere metaphor, though it may at times be understood as such. If Philo conceives of the Logos’s nature not much differently than the Stoics do, then the Logos cannot be a sheer abstraction. Instead, Philo’s Logos is decidedly a demiurgic, substantial, and rational fire of noetic and pneumatic nature, actively engaged everywhere in the universe.<sup>44</sup> And it is this vision that Dillon endorses:

In conclusion, it is my contention that, for Philo, as part of his heritage of Antiochian Platonism, the substance of not only the immanent Logos and the individual intellect, which are not perceptible to our senses, but also the heavenly bodies, which are, superficially at least, accessible to our vision, can be properly described as ‘incorporeal,’ by contrast with the corporeality of sublunar beings, while also being composed of pure fire or *pneuma*. This can be seen as a piece of muddle-headedness, and as a compromise with Stoic materialism, but it can also—more profitably in my view—be seen as an indication that the boundary between the corporeal and the incorporeal was not drawn by many ancient thinkers where we might think it should be drawn.<sup>45</sup>

Philo’s descriptions of the Logos are suffused with both biblical titles and Greek philosophical terminologies. Subsequently, we will find several Platonic terminologies, an almost obvious truth, since his indebtedness to Platonism is a common thing. As the second principle after God, the Logos is the first-born Son of God (*Somn.* 1.215), the Image of God par excellence, a second God (*QG* 2.62), and the “firstborn Word, the eldest of his angels, as the great archangel of many names” (*Conf.* 146). Philo’s Logos may also be connected with the theophanic passages attributed to Ezekiel and Daniel,

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<sup>44</sup> Dillon, “*Asōmatos*: Nuances of Incorporeality in Philo,” in *Philon d’Alexandrie et le langage de la philosophie*, eds. Carlos Lévy and Bernard Besnier (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 1998), 99–110.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 109–110. This type of complex vision about the various degrees of materiality and immateriality in late antique thought will also be present, as we will see in the fourth part of this study, in Irenaeus, Clement, Tertullian, and Origen.

in which the Hebrew Bible ascribes the title “Anthropos” to a divine figure; namely, Ezek 1:26, “a figure like that of a man” (דמות כמראה אדם; ὁμοίωμα ὡς εἶδος ἀνθρώπου), and Dan 7:13, “one like a son of man” (כבר אנוש; ὡς υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου). Such descriptions offer the reader a certain ontological ambiguity and a logical challenge to Philo’s very descriptions of the Logos. The divine titles which Philo ascribes to this heavenly figure place it on the ontological border between divine and angelic condition. The nature of the Logos, therefore, finds itself on the periphery between divine and angelic condition, or between God’s uncreated essence and creation itself.<sup>46</sup>

As a divine/angelic mediator, the Logos is endowed with a key role in the creation process. The divine/angelic mediatorial status of a second power in heaven and the implication in the process of creation bring Philo’s conception about the divine Logos closer to one of the main Hermetic and Gnostic Anthropos figures.<sup>47</sup>

### B. *The Heavenly Man as Adam’s Noetic Paradigm*

The first Anthropos trajectory investigated in the previous chapter focused the entire narrative around *one* single Adam: the glorious figure who most likely lost his radiant status in Paradise. In contrast to this position, Hermetic and Gnostic writings—generally seen as a product of the larger Alexandrian intellectual world—refer to *two* Adams, with the first usually accepted as a model of the second. To this point, Paul the Apostle acknowledges as well two Adams. Nevertheless, our first witness and, very plausible, the first author to introduce a discourse about two Adams is Philo of Alexandria, as an illustration of the Platonic distinction between paradigm and copy.

Philo, among them the most philosophically educated, assumes the Platonic concept of a noetic or intelligible world, populated with the noetic or intelligible paradigms according to which the Demiurge created the sensible objects of the visible universe. He conceives of the noetic world as created in God’s mind, which is the Logos, as an a-historical project of the future sensible world.<sup>48</sup> Of course, one of the paradigms is that of the

<sup>46</sup> E.g., *Her.* 205–206.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 268–269. This idea goes back to G.R.S. Mead who understood Philo’s Logos as an example of the Hermetic myth of the Heavenly Man in his *Thrice-Greatest Hermes: Studies in Hellenistic Theosophy and Gnosis; Translation of the Extant Sermons and Fragments of the Trismegistic Literature, with Prolegomena, Commentaries, and Notes* (1906; repr. London: J.M. Watkins, 1949), 1:226–231.

<sup>48</sup> E.g., *Opif.* 26–36. For Philo’s use of Plato’s *Timaeus* in connection with the creation of the

future human being—the future empirical and historical Adam—now projected in God’s mind:

Just such must be our thoughts about God. We must suppose that, when He was minded (διανοηθείς) to found the one great city, He conceived (ἐνενόησε) beforehand the models (τύπους) of its parts, and that out of these He constituted (συστησάμενος) and brought to completion a world discernable only by the mind (κόσμον νοητόν), and then, with that for a pattern (παραδείγματι), the world which our senses can perceive (τὸν αἰσθητόν).<sup>49</sup>

A second creation, the fashioning of the sensible universe, succeeds the noetic one. It is a logical consequence that the new process includes the creation of the historical and empirical Adam. Indeed, Philonian anthropogony implies two stages: one in which God creates the noetic paradigm of man, reported in Gen 1:26, and another in which he creates the historical Adam, described in Gen 2:7. It is very plausible that Philo noticed the incongruity of the two Genesis accounts about Adam’s creation, and attempted to offer a consistent hermeneutical solution through appropriating the Platonic scheme.

Philo employs the expression the “heavenly man” (οὐράνιος ἄνθρωπος) for the noetic paradigm of Adam (*Leg.* 1.31), also described as “incorporeal” (*QG* 2.56), and generally envisioned as an incorruptible conception in God’s mind: “he that was after the (Divine) image was an idea (ιδέα) or type (γένος) or seal (σφραγίς), an object of thought only (νοητός), incorporeal (ἄσώματος), neither male nor female, by nature incorruptible (ἀφθαρτος φύσει).”<sup>50</sup> It is methodologically inappropriate, therefore, to associate the noetic idea of human being with one of the Gnostic mythological figures of the Anthropos.<sup>51</sup> The Hermetic and Gnostic Heavenly Anthropos is a real character or a celestial hero, not a noetic idea. The Hermetic and Gnostic distinction between the archetype-Anthropos and the copy-Anthropos has to be understood on the level of a popular Platonism, since the distinction between paradigm and copy was a common place of the ancient Alexandrian culture. The Platonic distinction between the noetic and aesthetic (i.e., sensible, visible, empirical) Adams becomes distorted and vague, if not even lost, once the noetic and eidetic Adam turns into a real, empirical figure.

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human being, see also David T. Runia, *Philo of Alexandria and the Timaeus of Plato* (Leiden: Brill, 1986), 131–176.

<sup>49</sup> See *Opif.* 19 (LCL Philo 1:17). Cf. *Opif.* 24 and 36. For the double creation theory with respect to the human being, and therefore the two Adams, see *Opif.* 134, *Leg.* 1.31, *Her.* 231; and *QG* 1.4; 2.56.

<sup>50</sup> *Opif.* 134 (LCL Philo 1:107).

<sup>51</sup> See Fossum, *Name of God*, 268.

In what concerns Philo's historical and empirical Adam, it is worth mentioning that the Alexandrian delineates the character, surprisingly, in very positive terms, as well. He does not portray the fallen protopater primarily as lapsed and deceived but as the "most excellent" (ἄριστος), the "admirable and good" (καλὸς καὶ ἀγαθός; *Opif.* 136) as well as the "wise" Adam who is God's "viceroys and lord of all others" (*Opif.* 148).<sup>52</sup> However, the luminous and glorious connotations typical to the exalted Adam—as explored in the first paradigm—do not appear in Philo's portrait of the forefather.

We may further observe that the whole discussion about the diverse *anthrōpoi* in Philo gravitates around the idea of the Image of God, which is the Logos (e.g., *Opif.* 31). This Image is reflected in the universe in various ways, because the Demiurge fashions everything as a reflection of this primordial archetype. Philo's position regarding the identity of the Demiurge is quite clear: it is God the Father.<sup>53</sup> Some passages even specify that God remains uninvolved in, and detached from, the visible universe while generating it, because he creates everything through his incorporeal powers. These powers are frequently two in number and symbolized through the two cherubim of the Ark from the Holy of Holies.<sup>54</sup>

Although Philo's Logos is not the Demiurge, he is still involved in the process of creation as a divine Mind which encapsulates all the noetic paradigms. The Logos *is* the project of the world. Additionally, Philo asserts that the Logos is the "seal (σφραγίς) by which each thing that exists has received its shape (μεμόρφωται)."<sup>55</sup> Furthermore, *De confusione linguarum* 63 ascribes to the Logos a very similar role with Plato's Demiurge. Here, the Logos actually fashions only the visible universe (including the empirical Adam) through imitating the invisible one (including Adam's noetic paradigm), which the Father generated *ab origine*.

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<sup>52</sup> Cf. LCL Philo 1:109; 117. For the idea that Adam was created to exert dominion over all creatures and to rule the world, see Wis 9:2–3 and Gen 1.

<sup>53</sup> E.g., *Opif.* 21 and 77; *Conf.* 144; *Mos.* 2.49; *Decal.* 105; *Spec.* 3.189; *Aet.* 15.

<sup>54</sup> Cf. *Cher.* 27; *Mos.* 2.95–100; *Leg.* 1.39–49; 1.329; *Abr.* 121.

<sup>55</sup> *Fug.* 12 (LCL Philo 5:17).

### 3. PAUL AND THE SYNTHESIS BETWEEN THE SON OF MAN AND THE HYPOSTASIZED DIVINE IMAGE

Paul can be also regarded as a representative of the Jewish tradition which hypostasizes the Divine Image of Gen 1:27. In his letter to the Corinthians, Paul explicitly identifies Jesus Christ with the Image of God: “the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.”<sup>56</sup> The same idea appears in Col 1:13–15, a material of Pauline provenance (or from a writer of Pauline tradition), describing the eschatological kingdom of the Son of God where human beings live in a celestial light:

He [the Father] has rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation (ὃς ἐστὶν εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἀοράτου, πρωτότοκος πάσης κτίσεως).

The text sets the stage for a second divine figure, the Son of the Father, who plays the eschatological roles of savior and heavenly king. These attributes echo directly the tradition of the second power in heaven, especially that of the Son of Man present in Daniel, *1 Enoch*, and all the other similar Jewish intertestamental documents. In addition, the text depicts the Son through several other divine titles. He is the Divine Image, he precedes the existence of all other creatures, and, moreover, as the next two verses plainly state, the Son is endowed with demiurgic functions:

for in him (ἐν αὐτῷ) all things in heaven and on earth were created (ἐκτίσθη), things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him (τὰ πάντα δι’ αὐτοῦ καὶ εἰς αὐτὸν ἐκτίσται). He himself is before all things (ἐστὶν πρὸ πάντων), and in him all things hold together (τὰ πάντα ἐν αὐτῷ συνέστηκεν).<sup>57</sup>

While the Son of Man tradition is distinctly present in the Gospels, the word “image” does not function as a christological title there, or even as a more general divine name. The term εἰκὼν appears in the synoptic texts only in the episode about Caesar’s image on the coin, when Jesus is asked whether people should pay taxes to the Roman Emperor;<sup>58</sup> the Gospels do not identify

<sup>56</sup> 2 Cor 4:4.

<sup>57</sup> Col 1:16–17. As one can see in the second and fourth chapters, the verb συνίστημι or συνιστάνω (which means “set together, combine, associate, unite, sustain, make firm”) represents a christological expression which will play a catalytic role in the visions of the cosmic Christ who sustains the universe.

<sup>58</sup> I.e., Mark 12:16; Luke 20:24; Matt 22:20.



the Divine Image with the Son of God. Instead, the Gospel texts equate Jesus with the Son of Man figure, and they imply that Jesus enjoys a luminous and divine status in the glory of the Father. The Gospels also see this Son of Man figure endowed with an eschatological function as a Judge, re-Creator, Miracle Worker, and lastly, Forgiver of Sins.<sup>59</sup> Adding a new divine title, the author of the Gospel of John identifies the Son of God (a synonymous term for the Son of Man in the Johannine text) with the Logos.<sup>60</sup>

I suggest that Paul elaborates the theology of the Image of God using the intellectual framework provided in and through the Son of Man tradition addressed above. Furthermore, Paul accomplishes this task by identifying the Son of Man with the Image of God from Gen 1:27. To this point, one will note Paul's use of the phrase "Son of God," instead of "Son of Man," and his plain assertion, in Rom 8:29, that the Son's image (*eikon*) is a model for humans. The identity between the Divine Image and the Son of Man can be seen, for instance, in Col 3:1–10, which urges the reader to become renewed in the Creator's image.<sup>61</sup> At this point, the author of Colossians advises the audience to seek, or to see, the glorious Christ and clearly portrays him through classical Son of Man nuances sitting at the right hand of God and coming in glory at the eschaton:

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<sup>59</sup> For the glorious status of the Son of Man, his status of eschatological judge, or his glorious eschatological coming, see e.g.: Mark 8:38; 13:26–27; 14:62; Luke 9:26; 17:24–37; 21:27; 22:69; Matt 13:41; 16:27–28; 19:28; 24:27–51; 26:64; John 5:22–30; 12:23; 13:31. For Son of Man scholarship, see for instance John J. Collins, "Heavenly Representative: The 'Son of Man' in the Similitudes of Enoch," in *Ideal Figures in Ancient Judaism*, eds. G.W.E. Nickelsburg and J.J. Collins, SCS 12 (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1980), 122–124; Collins, "The Son of Man," Colpe, "Ho huioi tou anthropou," J.A. Emerton, "The Origin of the Son of Man Imagery," *JTS* 9 (1958): 225–242; Crispin H.T. Fletcher-Louis, "The Revelation of the Sacral Son of Man: The Genre, History of Religions Context and the Meaning of the Transfiguration," in *Auferstehung Resurrection*, eds. Friedrich Avemarie and Hermann Lichtenberger (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 247–298; Wolfgang Herrmann, "Baal," in *DDD*, 132–139; George W.E. Nickelsburg, "The Son of Man," in *DDD* 800–804; Heinz E. Tödt, *The Son of Man in the Synoptic Tradition* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1965); Christopher Tuckett, "The Lukan Son of Man," in *Luke's Literary Achievement*, JSNTSup 116 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995); James VanderKam, "Righteous One, Messiah, Chosen One, and Son of Man in 1 Enoch 37–71," in *The Messiah: Developments in Earliest Judaism and Christianity: The First Princeton Symposium on Judaism and Christian Origins*, eds. James H. Charlesworth et al. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 182–183; Michael Knibb, "Messianism in the Pseudepigrapha in the Light of the Scrolls," *DSD* 2 (1995): 177–180; Fossum, *Image of the Invisible*, 144–145; Crispin H.T. Fletcher-Louis, *Luke-Acts: Angels, Christology and Soteriology*, WUNT Reihe 2:94 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997).

<sup>60</sup> See John 1:34.

<sup>61</sup> In referencing Paul, I am fully aware that these texts may be considered to be either legitimate Pauline material or of the Pauline tradition.

So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God (ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θεοῦ καθήμενος). Set your minds on things that are above (τὰ ἄνω φρονεῖτε), not on things that are on earth. For you died and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.<sup>62</sup>

Following the excerpt from Colossians, Paul's 2 Corinthians 4 identifies Christ with the Image of God and the Lord who possesses a glorious face:<sup>63</sup> "For it is the God who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor 4:6).<sup>64</sup>

We may find as well in the Pauline literature a different terminology used to express almost the same idea that Christ is the Divine Image, namely, the notion of "form." Likewise, Paul associates this notion with the pre-incarnate Christ—a point Carey Newman addresses extensively.<sup>65</sup> Phil 2:6 is the classical example in which the author describes the pre-incarnate Jesus as the Lord who lived in the Form of God. Exalted as a King of heaven and Lord in the presence of the Father and of his glory, the character similarly echoes the Son of Man enjoying universal power and the glorious presence of the Father:

Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God (ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ), did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave (μορφὴν δούλου), being born in human likeness. And being found in human

<sup>62</sup> Col 3:1–4.

<sup>63</sup> Specifically, in this context, I am referring to 2 Cor 4:4.

<sup>64</sup> This ascetico-mystical exercise of setting the mind (φρονεῖν from φρονέω) on the heavenly things and expecting the vision of Christ-God enthroned in heavenly glory should be associated with Alan Segal's study on Paul, where Paul is described as a Second Temple mystic who saw actually Christ as the Son of Man. See Alan F. Segal, *Paul the Convert: The Apostolate and Apostasy of Saul the Pharisee* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990). In addition to this, 2 Cor 3:18 seems to suggest that the contemplation of the glory of Christ involves as well a transformation of the visionary into glory and Divine Image, a theological feature also part of the Second Temple mystical theology: "And all of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit." For transformational mysticism, see Martha Himmelfarb, "Revelation and Rapture: The Transformation of the Visionary in the Ascent Apocalypses," in *Mysteries and Revelations: Apocalyptic Studies since the Uppsala Colloquium*, eds. John J. Collins and James H. Charlesworth, JSPSup 9 (Sheffield: University Press: 1991), 79–90; Christopher R.A. Morray-Jones, "Transformational Mysticism in the Apocalyptic-Merkabah Tradition," *JJS* 43, no. 1 (1992): 1–31.

<sup>65</sup> See Newman, *Paul's Glory-Christology*.

form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross. Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (εἰς δόξαν θεοῦ πατρὸς).<sup>66</sup>

With this passage, it's worth noting the similarities between the synonymous terms "image" and "form," and see that they carry slightly different meanings. While "image" presupposes a paradigm and probably a secondary status, as long as the image (*eikon*) represents a copy of an archetype, the "form" (*morphe*) implies an identical structure or pattern shared by the Father and the Son.<sup>67</sup> As such, understanding the Son in this ontological perspective—specifically, as possessing the Form of God—Paul will logically conceive of the incarnation as a metamorphosis: a process of exchanging forms. Jesus will modify his form of divine glory for the form of the corruptible human being, as seen in Phil 2:7: "but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men." The Pauline Christ, in conclusion, is a pre-existent celestial character "in the form of God," the eschatological King of heaven, the Son of Man, who will come in glory, and the Image of God.

#### 4. PAUL'S HEAVENLY ANTHROPOS

The Pauline materials credit Jesus with another essential title: he is the Heavenly Anthropos.<sup>68</sup> To this point, George van Kooten illustrates the Pauline understanding of the Heavenly Anthropos and Divine Image coinciding with one another.<sup>69</sup> Moreover, van Kooten asserts that Paul's Heavenly Anthropos refers to the pre-existent Christ.<sup>70</sup> Since the Pauline Heavenly Anthropos is the Image of God, we can infer that the Pauline Anthropos

<sup>66</sup> Phil 2:5–11.

<sup>67</sup> This description, it might be added, will become a subject of conciliary debate a few centuries later, in what regards the nature, or essence, of God.

<sup>68</sup> For the key texts of this tradition, see Jacob Jervell, *Imago Dei: Gen. 1,26 im Spätjudentum, in der Gnosis und bei Paulus*, FRLANT 76 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1960).

<sup>69</sup> George H. van Kooten, *Paul's Anthropology in Context: The Image of God, Assimilation to God, and Tripartite Man in Ancient Judaism, Ancient Philosophy and Early Christianity*, WUNT 232 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 89.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*

belongs as well to the trend which hypostasizes the Divine Image. A passage generally describing Jesus Christ's victory over death and his resurrection begins by comparing Adam and Christ as two opposite *anthrōpoi*:

But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have died. For since death came through a human being (δι' ἀνθρώπου), the resurrection of the dead has also come through a human being (δι' ἀνθρώπου); for as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ. But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. Then comes the end, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father, after he has destroyed every ruler and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death.<sup>71</sup>

Paul continues his narrative through introducing the distinction between the natural or psychic body (σῶμα ψυχικόν) and the spiritual or pneumatic one (σῶμα πνευματικόν), where the natural body dies and rises as a spiritual body (1 Cor 15:44). He further describes Adam as a psychic human and Jesus as a pneumatic one, a life-giving spirit (πνεῦμα ζωοποιούν), and a Man from Heaven (ἄνθρωπος ἐξ οὐρανοῦ). Paul asserts that Adam and Christ function as two models which the two sorts of bodies imitate. But when the image of the first Adam refers to the earthly and even sinful human condition, the image of the Heavenly Adam refers to the condition of the resurrected Christ:

So also it is written, 'The first man (ὁ πρῶτος ἄνθρωπος), Adam, became (ἐγένετο) a living soul (εἰς ψυχὴν ζώσαν).' The last Adam *became* a life-giving spirit (εἰς πνεῦμα ζωοποιούν). However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural; then the spiritual. The first man (ὁ πρῶτος ἄνθρωπος) was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven (ὁ δεύτερος ἄνθρωπος ἐξ οὐρανοῦ).<sup>72</sup>

The fascinating aspect of this material is that the narrative context changes from protology, or at least the time before the incarnation, to eschatology, to the ontological status which humans and Jesus will have in heaven. Jesus Christ is again described as the Heavenly Man (ὁ ἐπουράνιος) as if the moment of Resurrection would have consisted, in fact, in a return to the pre-incarnate condition. Humans, in addition, are urged to bear the image of this eschatological Heavenly Man:

As was the man of dust, so are those who are of the dust; and as is the man of heaven (ὁ ἐπουράνιος), so are those who are of heaven. Just as we have borne

<sup>71</sup> 1 Cor 15:20–26.

<sup>72</sup> 1 Cor 15:45–46.

the image of the man of dust, we will also bear the image of the man of heaven (φορέσομεν καὶ τὴν εἰκόνα τοῦ ἐπουρανίου).<sup>73</sup>

The aforementioned passages describing the two Adams illustrate that, unlike the heavenly Adam, the ontological condition of the historico-empirical Adam is reduced to the ground and possesses a weakness that eventually leads to negative consequences. Far from having the Philonic status of an admirable viceroy of creation, the Pauline Adam is the door through which sin and ultimately death found their way into the world. While Philo and Paul emphasize the ideas of image and glory primarily in connection with the Son of God, the empirical Adam is not endowed with heavenly glory. However, both authors describe the protopater as the image of God (e.g., 1 Cor 11:7). At the same time, a clear anti-Adamic stance is present in the Pauline discourse, and the positioning of Christ as the real Adam is undoubtedly part of this polemical attitude.<sup>74</sup>

Compared to all the other archetypal *Anthropoi* from Philo to Gnosticism, Paul's Anthropos has one of the highest ontological conditions. Paul is much more certain than Philo about the divine status of his Anthropos. All creatures venerate Him and all creatures were created through Him and for Him. While the Philonian Logos-Anthropos was balancing between divine and angelic status, the Hermetic and Gnostic *Anthropoi* will sometimes involve clear divine complexions.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> 1 Cor 15:47–49. The distinction becomes here that between Christ's (resurrected) status and that of Adam as a human being. It is quite implausible to continue with the distinction natural body-resurrected body since the Greek makes the distinction between a being which lives in a soul and one which gives life, a title appropriate only for God, who is the life, and not for a creature. The expression "a living soul" (εἰς ψυχὴν ζώσαν) comes directly from Gen 2:7. Likewise, it is obvious from the examples of the New Testament, where the verb ζωοποιέω comes out (John 5:21; 6:63; 1 Cor 15:22; 36; 45; 2 Cor 3:6; 1 Pet 3:18; Rom 4:17) and the subject associated to them, that all refer to a divine agent: John 5:21 (the Father); 6:63 (the Spirit); 1 Cor 15:22 (Christ); 2 Cor 3:6 (the Spirit) and Rom 4:17 (God).

<sup>74</sup> See also Fletcher-Louis, *Glory of Adam* (e.g. 379), for the fascinating idea that the tradition of the glorious primordial Adam/Israel produced various polemics, or at least a sort of contest, regarding who is the true Adam, of course understood as a copy of the primordial Adam. The High Priest of the Temple in Jerusalem, the Teacher of Qumran, and various others figures competed for this position.

<sup>75</sup> See further that the Ophite position described by Irenaeus in *Haer.* 1.29–30 (in which the divine Father, Son, and Christ receive the title of Divine Anthropos) and the *Apocryphon of John* (in which the Thought, or Ennoia, which proceeds from the Father, is called the First Anthropos) place the Anthropos figure on a high divine position. Likewise, certain manuscript traditions of the *Apocryphon of John* and the *Sophia of Jesus Christ* describe the Father as the First Anthropos.

5. PRIMORDIAL ADAM AS DEMIURGE IN *POIMANDRES*

The Heavenly Anthropos theme receives different treatments in Hermetic and Gnostic contexts and it is necessary to have a schematic map of these treatments in order to know which of these positions will be reflected in the pre-Nicene paschal texts. In his study of the *Hermetic Corpus*, Peter Kingsley suggests that these tractates emerged around two thousand years ago as part of a larger sapiential tradition, usually called hermetic, which might have had some roots in Pythagoreanism.<sup>76</sup> Further, Kingsley approaches new elements concerning the *Sitz im Leben* of the corpus, considering that “its apparent origin [was] in the Egyptian temple practice of consulting dream oracles.”<sup>77</sup> Also regarding the time when this collection of texts emerged, Garth Fowden affirms that the Hermetic papyri of Vienna prove that “there were specimens in circulation (and even in collected form) by the end of the second century [CE].”<sup>78</sup>

The first of these tractates, entitled *Poimandres*, is the only material which speculates on the topic of the Divine Anthropos. Peter Kingsley explains the etymology of the term “Poimandres,” thereby strengthening Llewellyn Griffith’s thesis which argues that the roots should be found in the Coptic expression *P-eime-nt-rē* (i.e., the knowledge of Re).<sup>79</sup> The first sentence of the

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<sup>76</sup> Peter Kingsley, “An Introduction to the Hermetica: Approaching Ancient Esoteric Tradition,” in *From Poimandres to Jacob Böhme: Gnosis, Hermetism and the Christian Tradition*, eds. Roelof van der Broek and Cis van Heertum (Amsterdam: Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica, 2000), 17–40, 19: “Around two thousand years ago the teachings ascribed to the divine prophet Hermes Trismegistus were written down and preserved, in Egypt, by Greek-speaking people.” For the connections between Hermetism and Pythagoreanism, see Peter Kingsley, *Ancient Philosophy, Mystery and Magic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), esp. 333–347. See also Kingsley’s “Poimandres: The Etymology of the Name and the Origins of the Hermetica,” in van der Broek et al., *Poimandres*, 41–76. For an extended bibliography, see April D. DeConick, *Seek to See Him: Ascent and Vision Mysticism in the Gospel of Thomas*, SVC 33 (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 10.

<sup>77</sup> Kingsley, “Poimandres,” 56.

<sup>78</sup> Garth Fowden, *The Egyptian Hermes: A Historical Approach to the Late Pagan Mind* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 10. Kingsley also talks about “the first few centuries AD;” cf. “Poimandres,” 63.

<sup>79</sup> L. Griffith, in Walter Scott, *Hermetica* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924–1936), 2:16–17. Kingsley also shows that the expression *P-eime-nt-re* was taken over into Greek and re-etymologized into a traditional Greek divine title: the shephard of people, present already in Homer, *Iliad.*, 2.243 etc., Aeschylus, *Persians*, 241 (*poinanor*); Plato, *Statesman* 274e (*poimen andron*). Birger A. Pearson accepts this etymology in *Ancient Gnosticism: Traditions and Literature* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2007), 277.

tractate, “I am Poimandres, the knowledge [or the intellect] of the supreme authority (ὁ τῆς ἀθθεντίας νοῦς),” expresses the idea in both Coptic and Greek, since Re usually receives the title ἀθθέντης: the one who has the supreme authority or power.<sup>80</sup> Kingsley’s observations regarding Poimandres’s ontological status and function are similar to those of the Gnostic figures called the Νοῦς (i.e., the Intellect or Knowledge). Kingsley states, “this same word ἀθθεντία was often used in Gnostic sources as a term of reference for the supreme authority which is located in, and emanates from, the celestial realm of light.”<sup>81</sup> Poimandres is therefore the divine Nous which consists of, or comes from, the highest and luminous power. He is the heart (*ib*) or intellect (*sia*) of Re and stands for Re’s active and creative power in the universe.<sup>82</sup>

I would suggest that the Hermetic Anthropos is an illustration of the tradition of hypostasization of the concept of Divine Image from Gen 1:27. My hypothesis coincides with modern scholarship which considers that the origin of the Anthropos myth should be associated with Gen 1:26–27 and Ezek 1:26 (see the verse above, describing the Glory of God as a quasi-human-like form: the *demuth kemarēh adam* or *eidōs anthrōpou*).<sup>83</sup> Van der Broek, while commenting on the Hermetic tractate *Poimandres* and the Gnostic *Apocryphon of John*, affirms the following:

Both texts know the important notion of a heavenly Man—a notion that has to be explained through its Jewish background. ... I only call to mind that the prophet Ezekiel (1:26) saw the Glory of God in the shape of a man: the first manifestation of the transcendent God appears in human form. This and a specific interpretation of the creation of man in Genesis eventually led to the myth of the heavenly Man.<sup>84</sup>

Pursuing this line of argument, Birger A. Pearson also shows that the origin of the Hermetic and Gnostic myth of the Divine Anthropos represent

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<sup>80</sup> Kingsley, “Poimandres,” 48–50. For the original texts, see André-J. Festugière, *Corpus Hermeticum*, 4 vols. (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1954–1960), 1:7.

<sup>81</sup> Kingsley, “Poimandres,” 50.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 52. Kingsley also identifies Poimandres with the god Thoth, “he who knows” or “he who reads people’s hearts (*ip ib*).” *Ibid.* 55.

<sup>83</sup> Quispel, “Ezekiel 1,26”; Gruenwald, *Apocalyptic*, 128; Fossum, *Name of God*; Gilles Quispel, “Hermes Trismegistus and Tertullian,” *VC* 43 (1989): 188–190; Segal, *Paul the Convert*; Gilles Quispel, “Hermes Trismegistus and the Origins of Gnosticism,” in van den Broek, *Poimandres*, 145–166, esp. 146; Roelof van den Broek, “Gnosticism and Hermetism in Antiquity: Two Roads to Salvation,” in *Gnosis and Hermeticism from Antiquity to Modern Times*, eds. Roelof van der Broek and Wouter J. Hanegraaf (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998), 1–20, 15.

<sup>84</sup> Van den Broek, “Gnosticism and Hermetism,” 15.

a synthesis between Platonism and Gen. 1:26–27 and 2:7: “And, like that of the *Apocryphon of John*, the Hermetic myth is indebted to the two great creation texts of the Greco-Roman world, Plato’s *Timaeus* and the two creation stories in the book of Genesis.”<sup>85</sup> He continues by stating that *Poimandres* unveils a “profound influence of Alexandrian Judaism,” among others from 2 *Enoch*, itself a first-century Alexandrian Jewish apocalyptic text.<sup>86</sup> While also stressing the Hellenistic and Hermetic aspects of the document, Pearson concludes:

It is, of course, important finally to acknowledge that we are not, after all, dealing with a Jewish text, but with a “Hermetic” one. For all the obvious Jewish elements in the *Poimandres*, it is not a Jewish document. ... And when all is said and done, the Hermetic “creed” differs radically from the Jewish. This “creed” is best summarized in those places in the text in which are found examples of a Hellenistic, gnosticizing reinterpretation of the ancient Delphic maxim, γνῶθι σαυτόν.<sup>87</sup>

*Poimandres* and his Son—the Logos—receive such titles as Nous, Father, Life, and Light (*Poim.* 1.5 and 8), a common terminology for Jewish sapiential tradition from Wisdom to Philo. The document also describes *Poimandres* as the “archetypal form” (τὸ ἀρχέτυπον εἶδος).<sup>88</sup> The first tractate of the *Hermetic Corpus*, however, exhibits a theological and philosophical vision slightly different from that of the other materials of this collection. The first principle in *Poimandres* is God the Father-Nous, while the Logos-Son who comes from the Father plays the role of a second principle (*Poim.* 1.5). To the contrary, the general vision of the other tractates, and also of *Asclepius*, seems to describe God the Father primarily as the Good and the Whole, and sometimes even rejects the idea that the Father might be the *Nous* (*Tract.* 2.14).<sup>89</sup> Now, the *Nous* takes the place of the divine Logos as the second

<sup>85</sup> Pearson, *Ancient Gnosticism*, 280.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid. See also Pearson’s “Jewish Elements in *Corpus Hermeticum* I (*Poimandres*),” in his *Gnosticism, Judaism, and Egyptian Christianity* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1990), 136–147.

<sup>87</sup> Pearson, *Gnosticism, Judaism*, 146. See also Hans-Dieter Betz, “The Delphic Maxim ΓΝΩΘΙ ΣΑΥΤΟΝ in Hermetic Interpretation,” *HTR* 63 (1970), 465–484. Pearson argues here against H. Ludin Jansen’s hypothesis of a Jewish author of the tractate; see H. Ludin Jansen, “Die Frage nach Tendenz und Verfasserschaft im *Poimandres*,” in *Proceedings of the International Colloquium on Gnosticism, Stockholm, August 20–25, 1973*, eds. Geo Wiedengren and David Hellholm (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1977), 157–163.

<sup>88</sup> *Poim.* 1.8. Philo also defines the Logos, not the Father, as ἀρχέτυπος, ἰδέα τῶν ἰδεῶν (*Opif.* 25).

<sup>89</sup> For God as the Good, see *Tract.* 2.16; 6.3; 14.9; *Ascl.* 8; 34. For God as the Whole, see *Ascl.* 34.



principle of the universe.<sup>90</sup> Moreover, *Asclepius* brings forward a third divine figure, called a “second God,” “the sensible” (*aisthetos*; *Ascl.* 8 and 16). Guided by the supreme God, the second divinity plays an active role everywhere in the universe, enclosing the world, moving, and governing it.<sup>91</sup>

Unlike Philo, the entire *Corpus Hermeticum* conceives of the second principle—called Logos, Nous, or Pneuma—as possessing more demiurgic functions. The role of this second principle is similar to that of Philo’s powers which create and govern the world guided by the Father (although sometimes Philo’s Logos has the same function). The creation narrative of *Poimandres*, for instance, specifies that the Father gave birth to a second Nous (the Demiurge-Nous, distinct from the Logos), a god of fire and spirit who created (ἐδημιούργησε) the seven governors (διοικηταί) of the universe. Their duty is to encompass the sensible cosmos in circles, an idea recalling Philo’s seven spheres and planets of the universe.<sup>92</sup> Like Philo’s Logos, the Logos and the Demiurge-Nous in *Poimandres* make these circles move and this movement generates all the creatures of the universe.<sup>93</sup>

In *Poimandres*, it is also the Father himself (the Nous) who gave birth (ἀπεκύησεν) to a third, yet secondary principle of creation: the Anthropos.<sup>94</sup> The ontological status of this hero seems to be divine, although of secondary degree, since the text informs us that the Anthropos was a brother of the Demiurge-Nous.<sup>95</sup> This idea is supported by the fact that the Father produced the Demiurge-Nous and the Anthropos through the same process of generation.<sup>96</sup> The author describes the generation of the Anthropos and elaborates his portrait in the following lines:

Mind (Νοῦς), the father of all, who is life and light (ζωή και φῶς), gave birth to a man like himself (ἀπεκύησεν ἄνθρωπον αὐτῷ ἴσον) whom he loved as his own child. The man was most fair: he had the father’s image (τὴν τοῦ πατρὸς εἰκόνα); and god, who was really in love with his own form (τῆς ἰδίας μορφῆς), bestowed on him all his craftworks (δεμιουργήματα).<sup>97</sup>

<sup>90</sup> E.g., *Tract.* 5,2; 10,18;23; *Ascl.* 32.

<sup>91</sup> *Ascl.* 16–17. The *Tractates* also conceive of the world as a god (*Tract.* 8,5; 9,5). Similarly, *Asclepius* declares the heavens a god (*Ascl.* 3) and matter an ungenerated principle as in Plato and Aristotle (*Ascl.* 15).

<sup>92</sup> *Poim.* 9.

<sup>93</sup> *Poim.* 11. In *Poim.* 31, we are also told that the Father constituted everything that exists through his Logos.

<sup>94</sup> *Poim.* 12.

<sup>95</sup> *Poim.* 13.

<sup>96</sup> *Poim.* 9: ἀπεκύησε λόγῳ ἕτερον Νοῦν δημιουργόν.

<sup>97</sup> *Poim.* 12. For the English translation, I will follow Brian P. Copenhaver, *Hermetica: The*

Unlike the Logos and the Demiurge-Nous, with whom the Anthropos shares the ontological condition of a secondary divinity, the Heavenly Man bears God’s Form and Image. *Poimandres* describes the Father through a certain apophaticism, calling him “unspeakable and unsayable (ἀνεκλάλητε, ἄρρητε).”<sup>98</sup> This particular text seems to imply that the Father shares with his third son the attributes of life and light.<sup>99</sup>

Considering also the functions of the Divine Anthropos, the author depicts him as receiving from the Father complete authority in the demiurgic sphere (ἐν τῇ δημιουργικῇ σφαίρᾳ ἔξων τὴν πᾶσαν ἐξουσίαν).<sup>100</sup> Moreover, the Heavenly Man represents a preeminent object of contemplation: the seven governors and the Nature (*Physis*) love him, most likely because of the Divine Form which he bears. These seven governors even share with him part of their order (μετεδίδου τῆς ἰδίας τάξεως).<sup>101</sup> It is in this capacity that the Anthropos operates in creation reflecting the Divine Form over creatures. The result is a new creation which consists of seven proto-humans who will later become the first human beings. This follows a sort of hierogamy echoing that of Uranus and Gaia: *Physis* receives in herself the form of the Anthropos, and she gives birth to seven androgynous and exalted human beings (ἀπεκύησεν ἑπτὰ ἀνθρώπους).<sup>102</sup> As all the creatures of the universe were androgynous at that stage, the work of creation is accomplished through their separation in males and females at the moment when God pronounces the words, “Increase in increasing and multiply in multitude.”<sup>103</sup>

Similar to Philo, the author of *Poimandres* fashions a doctrine about more than one anthropomorphic figures disposed in an ontological ladder, where the anthropomorphic form is reflected on various layers of reality. The first of these figures is the Anthropos, the Form of God, and probably the paradigm in itself reflected in *Physis* (Nature) and the empirical man. The

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*Greek Corpus Hermeticum and the Latin Asclepius in a New English Translation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), here 3.

<sup>98</sup> *Poim.* 31. Kingsley also points out the Greek-Egyptian tradition about the changing forms of *Poimandres-Thoth* and that no one knows his “true form” (Kingsley, “*Poimandres*,” 75–76). However, this form or image is everywhere present in nature (*Poim.* 31).

<sup>99</sup> Cf. *Poim.* 21: “the father of all things was constituted of light and life (ἐκ φωτός καὶ ζωῆς συνέστηκεν ὁ πατήρ), and from him the man came to be.” These two attributes echo Philo’s Logos which is sometimes defined in connection with light and life terminology.

<sup>100</sup> *Poim.* 13.

<sup>101</sup> *Poim.* 13.

<sup>102</sup> *Poim.* 16.

<sup>103</sup> *Poim.* 18.

second is Nature, who takes the form of the Anthropos. Following these two figures, the third are the first seven *anthropoi*<sup>104</sup> and the fourth the empirical human being (i.e., man and woman).<sup>105</sup> In this regard, the general scheme is similar with Philo's, for whom the Logos was the Heavenly Anthropos and a paradigm in itself for the Cosmos and human beings. Moreover, Philo's noetic and abstract Idea of human being (*anthropos*) parallels the more realistic concept of the seven androgynous *anthropoi* of *Poimandres* as the origin of the empirical Adam.

## 6. THE ARCHETYPAL ANTHROPOS OF GNOSTICISM<sup>106</sup>

An overview of the late antique intellectual context in which the idea of Heavenly Anthropos emerged cannot be complete without mentioning the essential episode of the Gnostic Anthropos. As in the general discussion on the myth of the Anthropos, the student of Gnostic materials faces a real temptation to reach for a unifying theory regarding this topic. And yet, once again the cautious investigation of this subject leads us to consider a large variety of concepts of both Adam and Anthropos.

In this case, too, I would like to continue refining the deep methodological insights brought forth by previous scholars. A few preliminary ideas should be emphasized. First, as mentioned before, the new school of religions has advanced the thought that the origins of the Gnostic Anthropos myth should rather be searched for in the Jewish Second Temple tradition of the glorious Adam.<sup>107</sup> From a hermeneutical point of view, Gnostic *anthropoi*

<sup>104</sup> They may be compared with Philo's noetic man as models of the empirical man.

<sup>105</sup> Philo sometimes points out that it is not the body but the mind (*nous*) which is created according to the Image of God, which is the divine Nous or Logos, as in *Opif.* 69; cf. *Opif.* 31.

<sup>106</sup> By using the term "Gnosticism" I am aware of its intrinsic ambiguities already emphasized by such scholars as Michael A. Williams, *Rethinking "Gnosticism": An Argument for Dismantling a Dubious Category* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), Karen L. King, *What Is Gnosticism?* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), and Antti Marjanen, *Was There a Gnostic Religion?* (Helsinki: Finnish Exegetical Society, 2005) and "Gnosticism," in Susan A. Harvey and David G. Hunter (eds.), *Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 203–220. Employing Marjanen's language ("Gnosticism," 211), I also use the terms "Gnostic" and "Gnosticism" as heuristically useful categories, not to denote a religion but to "group ancient religious texts and thinkers for closer analysis and comparison."

<sup>107</sup> Several scholars have made the connection between the Jewish tradition of the glorious Adam and the Gnostic Anthropos, e.g., Charles H. Dodd, *The Bible and the Greeks* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1935), 147; Gilles Quispel, "Der gnostische Anthropos und die jüdische

seem to evolve from various interpretations of Gen 1:27, influenced by Ezek 1:26 and Dan 7:13 and 10:16. In addition, a few scholars of the new school also emphasized the fact that Gnostic materials are comprised of a large variety of Egyptian, Greek, and Christian themes, symbols, and concepts.<sup>108</sup> The Gnostic Anthropos, therefore, finds its roots based in more than just Jewish traditions; it is an eclectic concept of Late Antiquity.

Second, I argue that, while Jewish materials stage a single Adam who undergoes several transformations through various ontological conditions (i.e., from glorious garments to human form and back to angelic garments), some Gnostic texts envision two, three, or even more *anthropoi*, either primeval, or psychic, or of a different nature altogether. These figures are thought of as angels, aeons, demons, or divine characters which sometimes enjoy demiurgic functions and, at other times, are completely deprived of such capacities.<sup>109</sup> On the highest level of this anthropological ladder, there usually resides an Immortal Man (either identical or in a tight connection with the Divine Image). While on the other end of this ladder, the last rung, one may find the empirical and historical Adam. For this reason, it is plausible to conjecture that several Gnostic trends shared with Philo and the

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Tradition," *ErJb.* 22 (1953): 195–234; idem, "Ezekiel 1:26"; Jarl Fossum, "The Heavenly Man," in his *Name of God*, 266–291; Pearson, *Gnosticism, Judaism*.

<sup>108</sup> E.g., Gilles Quispel, "The Demiurge in the Apocryphon of John," in *Nag Hammadi and Gnosis: Papers Read at the First International Congress of Coptology (Cairo, December 1976)*, ed. R. McL. Wilson, NHS 14 (Leiden: Brill, 1978), 1–33; Pearson, *Ancient Gnosticism*, 280.

<sup>109</sup> Because both the process of hypostasization of the Divine Image and the exaltation of Adam implied the accretion of new titles and attributes, more or less divine, especially the demiurgic ones, the Gnostic Adamas/Anthropos cannot be uniquely regarded as Ezekiel's *Kabod*, as Gilles Quispel, for instance, sustains in his "Hermes Trismegistus," 146: "The *Anthropos* of so many Gnostic writings from Nag Hammadi is none other than Ezekiel's *Kabod*." cf. idem., "Ezekiel 1,26." There are many types of *Anthropoi*. Irenaeus attests to the doctrine of certain Valentinians who conceived of the *Anthropos* as the eleventh aeon in a list of many others such as Profundity, Life, Word, Idea, Intellect, etc. (see *Haer.* 1.1.1). Together with Ecclesia, this aeon produces twelve other aeons (cf. *Haer.* 1.1.2). In *Pistis Sophia*, the figure of Adamas might be as well a speculative development on the theme of the exalted luminous Adam, e.g. *Pist. Soph.* 1.15;27 (see Carl Schmidt, ed., *Pistis Sophia*, trans. V. MacDermot [Leiden: Brill, 1978], 24;37). And yet, in *Pist. Soph.* 2.66, Adamas is a Tyrant (παδάμας πτυρανός), possibly an angelic leader of luminous nature, fighting the light of Jesus or Pistis Sophia (Schmidt, 138; cf. *Pist. Soph.* 2.67). In 2.66, Adamas is also portrayed as possessing a "demonic power," (ἡττοῦν ἡδαιμονίου), in 2.67 as a "demonic emanation," (ἡτπροβολῆν ἡδαιμονίου ἡτε παδάμας πτυρανός), while in 2.77 the text calls him directly the "enemy" (ἡεχθρῶν). However, even this Adamas is able to create "two dark emanations and the dark place" (*Pist. Soph.* 2.79). Other documents, as we can see in this study, show the heavenly *Anthropos* deeply involved in creation.

Hermetism the tradition of the ontological ladder where a primordial and archetypal anthropomorphic shape was reflected on the various layers of the invisible and visible worlds taken together.

The Gnostic text *On the Origin of the World*, whose origin and affiliation still remain unknown, serves as a good example in its discussion of three distinct Adams. Here, the Adam of Light, the first of these figures, appears on the first day of creation:

Now the first Adam (ΠΡΩΡΤΙ ΘΕ ΝΑΔΔΑΜ), (Adam) of Light (ΝΗΤΕ ΠΟΥΘΕΙΝ), is spirit-endowed (ΟΥΠΝΕΥΜΑΤΙΚΟΣ) and appeared on the first day. The second Adam (ΠΗΛΑΞΟΝΑΥ ΝΑΔΔΑΜ) is soul-endowed (ΟΥΨΥΧΙΚΟΣ) and appeared on the sixth day, which is called Aphrodite. The third Adam (ΠΗΛΑΞΩΟΝΤ ΝΑΔΔΑΜ) is a creature of the earth (ΟΥΧΟΙΚΟΣ), that is, the man of the law, and he appeared on the eighth day.<sup>110</sup>

The passage first employs the Pauline distinction between the pneumatic (heavenly) and psychic (earthly) *anthropoi* (cf. 1 Cor 15:45–47), with the difference that Paul's first Adam was the empirico-historical one and the second was Christ, the Heavenly Anthropos. The text further distinguishes between the psychic and the earthly man. Louis Painchaud finds that the Gnostic material actually follows the Philonian distinctions between the primordial archetype of the anthropos (i.e., the Logos), the noetic anthropos, and finally, the sensible and material anthropos.<sup>111</sup> We should point out, however, as in the Hermetic case, the abstract idea of Adam was replaced with a real figure, the soul-endowed Adam of the sixth day. The Anthropos of the first Day manifests himself in creation when the prime parent Adam does not believe that “an immortal man of light (ΟΥΡΩΜΕ ΝΑΤΜΟΥ ΡΡΜΟΥΘΕΙΝ) had been existing before him.”<sup>112</sup> The first Adam also possesses important

<sup>110</sup> *Orig. World* II 117:28–36. For the critical edition, see J.M. Robinson and H.J. Klimkeit, eds., *The Coptic Gnostic Library: A Complete Edition of the Nag Hammadi Codices*, NHMS 33 (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 2:71. The edition includes as well an English translation by Hans-G. Bethge and Orval S. Wintermute. Cf. Louis Painchaud, *L'Écrit sans titre: Traité sur l'origine du monde (NH II,5 et XIII,2 et Brit. Lib. Or. 4926[1])* (Québec, Canada: Les Presses de l'Université Laval; Louvain-Paris: Peeters, 1995), 192. For other details about this writing, see also Pearson, *Ancient Gnosticism*, 221–224.

<sup>111</sup> Louis Painchaud, “Le sommaire anthropogonique de l'Écrit sans titre (NH II, 117:27–118:2) à la lumière de 1 Co 15:45–47,” *VC* 44 (1990): 382–393. Cf. Philo, *QE* 1.4. Painchaud also mentions that a similar speculation, using Pauline terminologies and being reshaped within the Philonian framework, appears in the Valentinian doctrine of Mark the Gnostic, as Irenaeus testifies in *Haer.* 1.18.2 (*ibid.*, 430).

<sup>112</sup> *Orig. World* II 107:26–27 (NHMS 33:50). Trans. Bethge and Wintermute, 51. For the whole episode of theophany, see II 107:18–109:1.

demiurgic functions.<sup>113</sup> While not being able to return to the ogdoad, the eighth heaven, he creates another heavenly eternal dominion for himself in the realm between the eighth heaven and chaos:

Now when Adam of Light (ΑΔΑΜ ΔΕ ΟΥΘΕΙΝ) conceived the wish to enter his light—i.e., the eighth heaven—he was unable to do so because of the poverty that had mingled with his light. Then he created for himself a vast eternal realm (ΑΥΤΑΜΕΙΟ ΝΑΡ ΨΟΥΝΟΣ ΨΑΙΩΝ). And within that eternal realm he created six eternal realms (ΑΥΤΑΜΙΟ ΨΟΟΥ ΨΑΙΩΝ) and their adornments, six in number, that were seven times better than the heavens of chaos and their adornments.<sup>114</sup>

Another example may be encountered in the writings of Marcus, one of the Valentinian Gnostics, who conceived of the Heavenly Man as the body of Truth (*Aletheia*) endowed with demiurgic powers.<sup>115</sup> According to Marcus, *Aletheia* represents a heavenly element (part of the second Tetrad), formed after the image of the power above, most likely that of the Father.<sup>116</sup> The text informs us that the Power of the Highest took the place of the Anthropos at the moment of Annunciation.<sup>117</sup> Additionally, Marcus makes a direct connection between the figure of the Anthropos and that of the Logos. In his conception, the latter being is described as the Form of the invisible Father.<sup>118</sup> Moreover, Jesus was engendered according to the likeness and form of the Anthropos, who eventually descended upon Jesus (*Haer.* 1.15.3). The whole elaboration proves to be a speculation on Gen 1:27, Phil 2:6, Col 1:15 (“He is the Image of the invisible God”), and 1 Cor 15:47 (“the second [i.e., Jesus]} was from heaven”).

<sup>113</sup> The figure is called “angel” (αγγελος) two times in II 108.15 and 108.20. For the tradition of creator-angels, see the seven governors of *Poimandres*, Basilides (Iren., *Haer.* 1.24.3), Saturninus (*Haer.* 1.24.1), or *Hypostasis of the Archons* 87.20–35. Cf. Birger A. Pearson, “Basilides the Gnostic,” in *A Companion to Second-Century Christian ‘Heretics’*, eds. Antii Marjanen and Petri Luomanen (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 1–31, esp. 14.

<sup>114</sup> *Orig. World* II 112.10–17 (NHMS 33:58). Trans. Bethge and Wintermute, 59.

<sup>115</sup> Cf. Irenaeus, *Haer.* 1.14.4.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.15.1–2.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.15.3.

<sup>118</sup> E.g. *Haer.* 1.14.1 (SC 264:207–208): “When first the unoriginated ((ὁὐ Πατήρ) οὐδείς), inconceivable (ἀνευνόητος) Father, who is without material substance (ἀνούσιος), and is neither male nor female, willed to bring forth that which is ineffable (τὸ ἀρρητον ῥητὸν γενέσθαι) to Him, and to endow with form that which is invisible (τὸ ἀόρατον μορφωθῆναι), He opened His mouth, and sent forth the Word similar to Himself (προήκατο Λόγον ὁμοιον αὐτῷ), who, standing near, showed Him what He Himself was (ἐπέδειξεν αὐτῷ ὃ ἦν), inasmuch as He had been manifested in the form of that which was invisible (αὐτὸς τοῦ ἀόρατου μορφῇ φανείς).” Trans. ANF 1:336.

A similar discussion appears in the Nag Hammadi text the *Gospel of the Egyptians*. The author portrays Adamas as the “eye of the light,” a light radiating from the First Anthropos and having a particular connection (if not being identical) with the Self-generated (*Autogenes*) Logos:

For it is [this one], Adamas (ΑΔΑΜΑΣ), the shining light (ΠΟΥΘΕΙΝ ΕΤΡΟΥΟ), who is from the Man (ΠΡΩΜΕ), the first Man, he through whom and to whom everything became, (and) without whom nothing became. The unknowable, incomprehensible Father came forth. He came down from above for the annulment of the deficiency. Then the great Logos, the divine Autogenes (ἄλογος παυτογενής), and the incorruptible man Adamas (παφθαργος ἡρωμε αΔΑΜΑΣ) mingled with each other.<sup>119</sup>

The second sentence, “For this is the first man, he through whom and to whom everything came into being, (and) without whom nothing came into being,” refers either to Adamas or to the First Man. At the same time, the sentence obviously echoes the christological expressions and titles of Rom 11:36 and John 1:3 which associate the Son in the creation of the universe. In so doing, the sentence endows Adamas with real demiurgic functions.

Another source, the tractate *Eugnostos the Blessed*, “a product of early Jewish Gnosticism,” presents a sequence of two anthropomorphic aeons generated from the Father.<sup>120</sup> In this particular text, the description of the Father receives quite a rigorous apophatic description:

He Who Is is ineffable (ΟΥΑΤΩΔΑΧΕ). No principle knew him, no authority, no subjection, nor any creature from the foundation of the world, except he alone. For he is immortal and eternal, having no birth; for everyone who has birth will perish. He is unbegotten, having no beginning; for everyone who has a beginning has an end. No one rules over him. He has no name; for whoever has a name is the creation of another. He is unnameable. He has no human form (ΜΟΡΦΗ ΗΡΩΜΕ); for whoever has human form is the creation of another. He has his own semblance (ἴΜΟΥΣΙ)—not like the semblance we have

<sup>119</sup> *Gos. Eg.* III 49.8–19. Ed and trans. A. Böhlig, F. Wisse, and P. Labib, *Nag Hammadi Codices III,2 and IV,2: The Gospel of the Egyptians (The Holy Book of the Great Invisible Spirit)* (Leiden: Brill, 1975), 92. Cf. *Gos. Eg.* IV 61.8–11: “For this one, Ad[amas,] is [a light] (ΟΥΟΥΘΕΙΝ) which radiated [from the light; he is] the eye of the [light.] For this is the first man, because of whom all things [are, to] whom all things [are, and without whom there is nothing,] the [Father] who [came forth,] who is inaccessible [and unknowable,] and who came [down from above] for the annulment [of the] deficiency. Then the [great,] self-begotten, divine [Word] (ΠΗ[ΟΣ ΗΡΩΔΑΧ]Ε ΗΑΥΤΟΓΕΝΗΣ ΗΝΟ[ΥΤΕ]) [and the] incorruptible man A[damas] ([ΠΑ]ΤΧΩΣΗ ΗΡΩΜΕ Α[ΔΑ]ΜΑΣ) became] a mixture [which is man] ([ΠΡΩ]ΜΕ).” (ibid., 93).

<sup>120</sup> Pearson, *Ancient Gnosticism*, 211.

received and seen, but a strange semblance (οὐζιλλεα ἰωῤῥῖῃω) that surpasses all things and is better than the totalities. It looks to every side and sees itself from itself. He is infinite; he is incomprehensible (οὐαῖῥαζοϩ). He is ever imperishable (and) has no likeness (πεϩεῖῃε) (to anything). He is unchanging good. He is faultless. He is everlasting. He is blessed. He is unknowable, while he (nonetheless) knows himself. He is immeasurable. He is untraceable. He is perfect, having no defect. He is imperishably blessed. He is called “Father of the Universe.”<sup>121</sup>

The author, however, inserts two cataphatic descriptions in this apophatic discourse: the Ineffable God is called the “Father” and he has a proper semblance, a strange one (οὐζιλλεα ἰωῤῥῖῃω), because it is different from everything else.<sup>122</sup> The text further informs us how the Father generates the primordial light as an androgynous Anthropos:

In the beginning, he decided to have his likeness (εῖῃε) become a great power. Immediately, the principle (*or* beginning) of that light appeared as Immortal Androgynous Man (ἰωῤῥωῃε ἰαεαῃῃαῃοῃ ἰζοοῤῥεῖῃε). His male name is “[Begotten,] Perfect [Mind (ἡῃοϩε)].” And his female name (is) “All-wise Begettress Sophia.”<sup>123</sup>

Following this passage, a few lines later, the text unveils a heavenly mystery: the Father passes on a great authority and entourage to the Immortal Man, in a gesture echoing the aforementioned text of Daniel 7. Additionally, the passage introduces a new cataphatic name of the Father, who is also called “Man:”

Through Immortal Man appeared the first designation, namely, divinity and kingdom, for the Father, who is called “Self-Father Man,” revealed this. He created a great aeon for his own majesty. He gave him great authority, and he ruled over all creations. He created gods and archangels and angels, myriads without number for retinue.<sup>124</sup>

<sup>121</sup> *Eugnostos* III 71.13–73.3, in D.M. Parrott, *Nag Hammadi Codices III,3–4 and V,1 with Papyrus Berlinensis 8502,3 and Oxyrhynchus Papyrus 1081: Eugnostos and the Sophia of Jesus Christ* (Leiden: Brill, 1991), 50–56.

<sup>122</sup> The same expression appears in the *Sophia of Jesus Christ*, NHC III 94.24–95.5, in Parrott, *Nag Hammadi*, 55. In addition to this, the version of the same *Soph. Jes. Chr.* preserved in Papyrus Berlinensis 8502,3 expresses the idea of resemblance through the noun οὐεῖῃε (“likeness”) instead of οὐζι (“semblance,” in Parrott’s translation, 55). The *Eugnostos* version preserved in NHC V also unveils a noticeable conception: the Father is without likeness (εῖῃε) and form (ῃοῤῥῃ), but “only he [has a resemblance (ἰωῤῥεῖῃε)] [that] is greater than [everything and better] than everything” (*ibid.*, 54).

<sup>123</sup> *Eugnostos* III 76.19–77.4.

<sup>124</sup> *Eugnostos* III 77.9–22.



The concept of likeness (εἶνε), frequently denoting the Father's inaccessible form, is now equated with a luminous, immortal, and androgynous Anthropos. Following our textual survey thus far, the *Sophia of Jesus Christ* will identify the Anthropos with Jesus Christ.<sup>125</sup> Here, while the Immortal Man is depicted as "full of every imperishable glory and ineffable joy," he generates, as well, a second aeon: the First Begetter. This second aeon is also called the "Son of Man" and "Adam of Light."<sup>126</sup> Thus, the First Begotten Son of God owns the power to create a diversity of heavenly beings:

First-begotten, since he has [his] authority from his [father], created a great [aeon] for his own majesty, [creating] numberless myriads of angels for retinue. The whole multitude of angels, who are called "Assembly of the Holy Ones," are the lights and shadowless ones.<sup>127</sup>

Subsequently, a Valentinian document, the *Gospel of Philip*, identifies the Heavenly Anthropos with Christ and the Son of Man in quite similar ways with Pauline theology. Whereas *Gos. Phil.* 55.12, 58.20, and 60.24 call Christ the "perfect anthropos (πτελιος ῥρωμε)," *Gos. Phil.* 58.17 names him straightforwardly "[the] heavenly Anthropos (πρῆμπε)":

The heavenly man (πρῆμπε) has many more sons than the earthly man. If the sons of Adam are many, although they die, how much more the sons of the perfect man (ἡπτελιος ῥρωμε), they who do not die but are always begotten.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> E.g., *Soph. Jes. Chr.* 100.16–102.19: "Matthew said to him: "Lord, Savior, how was Man (ῥρωμε) revealed?" The perfect Savior said: "I want you to know that he who appeared before the universe in infinity, Self-grown, Self-constructed Father, being full of shining light and ineffable, in the beginning, when he decided to have his likeness (εἶνε) become a great power, immediately the principle (or beginning) of that light appeared as Immortal Androgynous Man, that through that Immortal Androgynous Man they might attain their salvation and awake from forgetfulness through the interpreter who was sent, who is with you until the end of the poverty of the robbers. And his consort is the Great Sophia, who from the first was destined in him for union by the Self-begotten Father, from Immortal Man, who appeared as First and divinity and kingdom, for the Father, who is called 'Man, Self-Father,' revealed this. And he created a great aeon, whose name is Ogdoad, for his own majesty. He was given great authority, and he ruled over the creation of poverty. He created gods and angels (and) archangels, myriads without number for retinue from that Light and the tri-male Spirit, which is that of Sophia, his consort. For from this, God originated divinity and kingdom. Therefore he was called 'God of gods' and 'King of kings.'" The soteriological function of the Divine Anthropos is also remarkable in this passage. As one can see in Papyrus Oxyrhynchus 1081 line 45, the word "likeness" (εἶνε) most likely translated the Greek τὸ ὁμοίωμα (ibid., 214).

<sup>126</sup> See *Eugnostos* V 8.18–21 for the glorious attributes of the Immortal Man and III 81.10–12 for the Adam of Light.

<sup>127</sup> *Eugnostos* V 9.7–16; cf. III 81.1–6. The same demiurgic capacities are transferred from the Father to Christ, the First-begotten, in *Soph. Jes. Chr.* 104.22–105.2.

<sup>128</sup> *Gos. Phil.* 58.17–22. For the critical edition, see Hans-Martin Schenke, *Das Philippus-*

As in the Gospels and Pauline texts, chapter 12 associates very obviously demiurgic functions with Christ: "The Son of Man (παῦρος Ἰησοῦς) received from God the capacity to create (ἐτρεφῶντ). He also has the ability to beget (ἐτρεφῶντ)." <sup>129</sup>

Roelof van den Broek conjectures that the four versions of the Sethian *Apocryphon of John* and the Ophite position Irenaeus attests to in *Haer.* 1.29–30 represent several developments of a doctrine which probably started as a theory about an androgynous divine Mother-Father (μητροπάτηρ). The final products of this development illustrate a doctrine that could be described as "an elaborate myth of the heavenly Anthropos pressed into a trinitarian scheme": the Father of All (the First Man and the First Light), his Son (Second Man and the Son of Man), and the Spirit as the First Woman. All three produce the perfect Man, Christ. <sup>130</sup>

Of the four versions of the *Apocryphon of John*, only BG 48.1–3 defines the Father of All as the First Man (παροῦς Ἰησοῦς). <sup>131</sup> This detail makes the Berlin Codex contradict itself, since the *Apocryphon* develops a different logic of the Divine Anthropos, a logic where the Father lacks almost any determination, and the Son actually becomes the Anthropos. The Father of All, the highest reality of this ontology, receives various negative attributes. Two of the manuscripts profess an apophatic vision about the Father while affirming, at the end of a long list of negative descriptions, that "no one of us knows the attributes of the immeasurable One except for him who dwelt in him." <sup>132</sup> Hence, the Father is the unmanifested in itself. To the contrary, his Thought (*Ennoia*), also called the *Eikon* of the Father and Barbelo, therefore the manifested dimension of the Father, is primarily

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*Evangelium* (*Nag Hammadi Codex II,3*) (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1997), 26. For the English translation, see W.W. Isenberg, in *The Nag Hammadi Library in English*, ed. J.M. Robinson (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 145. See also the same translation in *Nag Hammadi Codex II,2–7 together with XIII,2*, *Brit.Lib.Or. 4926(1)*, and *P.Oxy. 1, 654, 655*, ed. Bentley Layton (Leiden: Brill, 1989), 1:142–215.

<sup>129</sup> *Gos. Phil.* 81.19–21 (Isenberg, 157). Schenke considers that the two original Greek words standing for the demiurgic capacities of the Son of Man were κτίζειν and γεννᾶν (*Philippus*, 495).

<sup>130</sup> R. van den Broek, "Autogenes and Adamas: The Mythological Structure of the Apocryphon of John," in *Gnosis and Gnosticism: Papers Read at the Eighth International Conference on Patristic Studies* (Oxford, September 3rd–8th 1979), ed. M. Krause (Leiden: Brill, 1981), 16–25. Cf. Irenaeus, *Haer.* 1.30.1; 2; 6; 13 (SC 264:364; 366; 370).

<sup>131</sup> See Michael Waldstein and Frederik Wisse, eds., *The Apocryphon of John: Synopsis of Nag Hammadi Codices II,1; III,1; and IV,1 with BG 8502,2* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 84.

<sup>132</sup> *Ap. John III* 6.24–7.1 and BG 26.12–14 (Waldstein and Wisse, 28–30).

defined as the First Anthropos.<sup>133</sup> Furthermore, the Father generates another divine figure called Autogenes, Monogenes, Christos, and Light. The text does not correlate the attribute “Man” with this third figure but defines it as possessing demiurgic capacities. The three divine figures eventually produce the perfect Anthropos, Adamas:

And (δέ) from the Foreknowledge (πρόγνωσις) of the perfect Mind (τέλειος Νοῦς), through the revelation of the will of the invisible Spirit and the will of the Self-Generated (αὐτογεννήτης), (the) perfect Man (ἄνωμε ἰγελειος) (came forth), the first revelation, and truth. It is he whom the virginal Spirit called Pigerada-Adam(s) (πιγερα α.α.α.μ.α.ν).<sup>134</sup>

The text further presents the creation of the material Adam in a second anthropogonic stage in which seven powers or authorities led by the chief archon, Yaltabaoth, offer the seven psychic elements to their leader in order to fashion Adam. As in the Jewish Second Temple traditions, the forefather has a luminous body.<sup>135</sup> The seven authorities create Adam according

<sup>133</sup> ἡογροεῖτ ἡπρωμε in III 7.23–24 and BG 27.19–10, or πωρητ ἡπρωμε in II 5.7 and IV 7.21.

<sup>134</sup> *Ap. John* II 8.29–34 (Waldstein and Wisse, 53). The passage appears in a similar form in the two short versions. “From the Foreknowledge with perfect Mind, through the gift and good will of the great invisible Spirit, in the presence of the Self-Generated, the perfect, true, holy man (came forth), the first one to come forth. He was named Adamas.” (*Ap. John* III 12.24–13.4, Waldstein and Wisse, 52). “And from Foreknowledge with perfect mind, through God, through the good will of the great invisible Spirit and the good will of the Self-Generated, the perfect, true Man (came forth), the first one to come forth. He named him Adam.” (*Ap. John* BG 34.19–35.5, Waldstein and Wisse, 52). The tractate *Zostrianos* 6.22 mentions a very similar character, “the forefather Geradama (the Old Adam).” (John Sieber, ed., *Nag Hammadi Codex VIII* [Leiden: Brill, 1991], 43). While *Zost.* 13.3–6 informs us about “the great male Protophanes, the perfect [child] who is higher than god, and his eye, Pigeradama,” chapter 30.4–7 portrays Adam as a “perfect man” (ἰγελειος ἡπρωμε) and an “an eye of Autogenes,” whose knowledge (γνώσις) comprehends that of Autogenes. To be noted is his connection with Autogenes, usually called Monogenes and Christ, which is defined as Image or Anthropos.

<sup>135</sup> *Ap. John* II 15–18. For the luminous body (πρωμα ... ογοειν) of the material Adam, see *Ap. John* II 19.33 and IV 30.18 (Waldstein and Wisse, 115). Irenaeus testifies, as well, to the Ophite doctrine about the light, luminous, and spiritual bodies of the prelapsarian Adam and Eve (*leuia et clara et uelut spiritualia corpora*); see *Haer.* 1.30.9 (SC 264:374). It is worth mentioning that *Adversus omnes haereses* 1 (CCSL 2:1401–1402), a spurious document ascribed to Tertullian, gives an account about Saturninus’s anthropogony which is very close to that from *Ap. John*: “Afterwards, again, followed Saturninus: he, too, affirming that the inascible Virtue, that is God, abides in the highest regions, and that those regions are infinite, and in the regions immediately above us; but that angels far removed from Him made the lower world; and that, because light from above had flashed refulgently in the lower regions, the angels had carefully tried to form man after the similitude of that light (*ad similitudinem illius luminis angelos hominem instituere curasse*); that man lay crawling on

to the image of the primordial Anthropos, either the Father or his *Ennoia-Eikon*, reflected in waters.<sup>136</sup> This multifaceted system is remarkable because the concept of Anthropos actually functions as an ontological feature, an anthropomorphic form present everywhere in the world, from the highest divinity or, simply, his manifested Thought to the material Adam.

Lastly, at the end of this impressive list of documents referring to the Heavenly Anthropos, I would mention the *Untitled Text* from the Bruce Codex. Here, in a long hymn of praise which the entire heavenly realm chants to the highest reality, the One Alone, one can find a passage reporting the generation of a cosmic Anthropos clothed in creation as with a garment:

And thou hast created them [the hidden worlds], for thou hast begotten Man (ΝΤΑΚΧΠΕ ΠΡΩΜΕ) in thy self-originated mind, and in the thought and the perfect idea. This is Man begotten of mind (ΠΡΩΜΕ ΝΧΠΟ ΝΝΟΥΣ), to whom thought gave form (ΔΙΑΝΟΙΑ ΤΗΟΡΦΗ). It is thou who hast given all things to Man. And he has worn them like garments, and he has put them on like clothing, and he has wrapped himself in the creation like a mantle. This is Man whom the All prays to know. Thou alone hast commanded Man that he be revealed, so that they know thee through him, that thou hast begotten him. And thou wast revealed according to thy will. Thou art he to whom I pray, O Father of all fatherhoods, and God of gods, and Lord of all lords.<sup>137</sup>

This cosmic Anthropos evinces similar features with the anthropomorphic and cosmic Christ-figure of Melito, Irenaeus, Pseudo-Hippolytus, and other early Christian materials.

## 7. CONCLUSION

At the conclusion of this extensive literary review, it is impossible to offer a unique definition of the Divine Anthropos, as it is clear that there is no unique conception about this figure. Rather, we can state that there is a large body of diverse conceptions. However, these theories may be classified in

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the surface of the earth; that this light and this higher virtue was, thanks to mercy, the salvable spark in man, while all the rest of him perishes." For the English translation, see Tertullian, *Against All Heresies* 1, ANF 3:649.

<sup>136</sup> The reflection of the primordial Anthropos in waters above matter, which in fact represents his revelation in the world under the ogdoad, represents a common mythological feature in *Poimandres* 14, *Ap. John* (II 14, III 22, IV 23, BG 48), and *Hyp. Arch.* 87:30–35.

<sup>137</sup> *Untitled Text* 17.5–19, in Carl Schmidt, ed., *The Book of Jeu and the Untitled Text in the Bruce Codex*, trans. and notes Violet MacDermot (Leiden: Brill, 1978), 259.

two categories or two main hermeneutical trajectories. The first relates to the Jewish Second Temple traditions, in which such materials as the Dead Sea scrolls and the apocryphal and apocalyptic writings exalted the protopater of Gen 2:7 to a glorious being. As suggested, they affirm the existence of only one Adam, determined to be the empirical or earthly Adam. This is the Adam created on the sixth day of creation, the Adam of Gen 2:7 read, most likely, through Ezekiel 1 and 28 as a primordial luminous creature. Already representing a tradition which depicts the prelapsarian Adam as perfect in beauty and covered in splendor, Ezekiel 28 opens the way for a very popular tradition in ancient and medieval Jewish and Christian mysticism. Of particular interest in this regard is the *Testament of Abraham*, which describes the same Adam of the sixth day but places his creation in heaven and depicts him there enthroned in glory as an identical copy of Yahweh, the Lord of Glory. From a hermeneutical point of view, the text also leaves room for understanding this glorious Adam in connection with Gen 1:1, since the document calls him the Father of Light.

A second class of documents, particularly the texts of Philo, Paul, and the Hermetic and Gnostic writings, hypostasized the Divine Image of Gen 1:27. These materials do not share a common doctrine about the Divine Anthropos but present various positions which range from portraying the Anthropos as a secondary divine figure, who exhibits demiurgic functions, to conceiving of him as aeon, angel, idea, or human being. There are, however, a few common features. These texts mention two, three, and sometimes even more *anthropoi*. In this analysis, one can argue that the first Anthropos is a heavenly and divine character, while the last one denotes the historical Adam of the sixth day. In addition, Gen 1:27 (God created Adam/Anthropos) is sometimes read through Gen 1:1, and the light of the first day is identified with the first Anthropos, several times also called the Adam of light or the Adam of the first day. A few texts even conceive of God the Father as the First Man.

This paradigm of more than one Adam occurs with Philo's interpretation of the two different narratives of Gen 1:27 and 2:7 through use of the Platonic distinction between the noetic idea of Adam (i.e., the heavenly anthropos) and the sensible and empirical Adam. It is also in Philo that one can find, first of all, the conception about the many *anthropoi* in the same system; all of them organized in an ontological ladder which reflects the anthropomorphic shape on various levels of reality. This shape is reflected in the Logos-Anthropos, the world, the noetic Adam, and the empirical Adam. Likewise, we can find in Philo the roots of this tradition which prefers to hypostasize the concept of the Divine Image of Gen 1:27.

Additionally, Philo is also the first to ascribe to the Divine Image a special role in the creation of the universe, a role also present in Paul and the Hermetic and Gnostic writings. It is for these three special features of this paradigm—hypostasization of the Divine Image, the anthropomorphic ladder with sometimes more than two or three *anthropoi*, and the demiurgic functions of the Anthropos—that we can assert that the Gnostic Anthropos, in particular, and more generally the idea of Divine Anthropos, is rather a matter of Jewish Hellenism than Jewish apocalypticism and Dead Sea ideas. To the extent we can consider Philo and Paul representatives of the Second Temple, we can also affirm that the Divine Anthropos myth in all its complexity echoes Second Temple traditions.

Regarding the larger topic of the present study in the light of these results, we should notice that early Christian documents from the paschal writings to those about the *Kyriakos Anthropos* are closer to this second paradigm than the paradigm of the exalted Adam. As outlined thus far, this chapter has offered the background for the idea of Heavenly Anthropos in early Christian documents and especially the paschal writings. The result of this survey has provided us with a general map of the Hellenized contexts which developed the idea of Heavenly Anthropos and all the possible meanings of this figure in order to understand the sense and significance of the paschal Anthropos. As we will see in the subsequent sections of this study, paschal theology will inherit from the Pauline vision the synthesis of the two traditions about Adam/ Anthropos—Adam’s exaltation and the hypostasization of the Divine Image—into a remarkable soteriological doctrine, which I called “*eikonic* soteriology.” This theory on salvation envisions Christ playing the roles of Divine Image, Heavenly Anthropos, and Demiurge.



## SUMMARY OF PART ONE

This part has shown us that early paschal homilies envisioned the divine dimension of Jesus Christ as a celestial human-like figure of large proportions; a Divine Anthropos. While Melito pictured Christ as the Anthropos who comprises and sustains the universe, Pseudo-Hippolytus connotes Jesus' divine dimension as luminous, gigantic, and noetic. In addition, Origen's speculations of Christ as a Divine Anthropos present him as a noetic, spiritual Man, self-offering himself for humanity. The goal of this sacrifice is presented in liturgical terms: humans have to become priests able to consume spiritually the spiritual limbs of the noetic Christ in order to be saved. Methodius, in his turn, conceives of the Heavenly Anthropos in Pauline terms as Jesus' pre-incarnate condition and equates the Anthropos with the Divine Image and Jesus' body of glory. This fact makes us suppose that the Heavenly Anthropos as well as the pre-incarnate and the eschatological Jesus may have the same ontological condition. It is, however, problematic how the pre-incarnate Jesus would have the same ontological status with the glorified flesh of the resurrected Jesus.

An investigation of the roots of this tradition made us conclude that this is an elaboration of two early christological trends. First, Jesus is the Son of Man, a luminous divine figure dwelling at the right of the Father, a glorious human likeness playing the roles of Savior, Judge, and Divine Warrior. Second, the Divine Anthropos tradition is examined. Although significant roots of the Anthropos idea can already be encountered in the Son of Man tradition, the latter cannot be fully categorized as the Anthropos tradition, since, along with a vague and problematic anthropomorphism, the Son of Man remains an eschatological (Savior, Judge, and Divine Warrior) figure. To the contrary, the Divine Anthropos is a protological hero and, in the more elaborated accounts, a Demiurge character highly involved in the process of creation. The two characters, however, share the salvific function, at least starting with Paul's Heavenly Anthropos.

An inspection of the Adam/Anthropos tradition has shown us that it evolved in two distinct ways from the two biblical anthropologies of Gen 1:27 and 2:7, either exalting the empirical Adam of Gen 2:7 to a glorious figure or hypostasizing the Divine Image of Gen 1:27. It is the second trend which is most appropriately called the heavenly or Divine Anthropos, a trend developed by Philo, Paul, and the Hermetic and Gnostic writings. The paschal



texts articulated the idea of Divine Anthropos within the framework of the second trajectory as well as the Pauline vision of the Divine Anthropos. This refers to the ontological status and divine functions which Paul envisioned for the Divine Anthropos in his writings.

Finally, it should be noted that the Christian Divine Anthropos, from Paul to the early paschal writings, combines the titles and functions of the two figures, the Son of Man and the divine Demiurge-Anthropos, into a unique character: Jesus Christ. Additionally, Christ is, at the same time, the protological Image, Anthropos, and Demiurge as well as the eschatological Savior, Son of Man, Judge, and Demiurge. This synthesis, as we will see in the following chapters, will generate the matrix in which Paul and the paschal authors will elaborate a particular theory on salvation: the “*eikonic soteriology*.”

PART TWO

PASCHAL CHRISTOLOGIES AND SOTERIOLOGIES



## INTRODUCTION TO PART TWO

As previously specified, pre-Nicene writers fashioned their paschal Christologies as discourses connected with the liturgical milieu of the festival of Easter, and they did this by employing elements inherited from biblical vocabulary and Second Temple idioms. Using symbols, images, and divine titles rather than syllogistic inferences, they framed the meaning of each title through a christological lens and deep interconnections with all other titles. The general semantic net emerged in this way subsumed a special type of logic, with each divine title reflecting a particular conception about Jesus' divine dimension and a special modality of action associated with that title. Thus, Jesus Christ is defined in an apocalyptic manner as a savior expected to come in glory on the night of Pascha. He is also a divine Archpriest, a Divine Image (*Eikon*), and a Demiurge who created humanity as an earthly copy (*eikon*). Likewise, he is the heavenly Commander-in-Chief and Divine Warrior able to fight Death and save humankind.

Jesus' actions, therefore, are primarily interpreted as salvific actions. Here, salvation denotes a fundamental religious category, most likely present in all or almost all religions of the world. Humanity has ever envisioned itself in a deplorable and appalling condition from which only a hero or a god—understood as a human-like being possessing functions greater than those of the ordinary human being, a “super-man”—may rescue it. We have to recall the heroes of antiquity from Gilgamesh to Hercules to realize that ancient civilizations imagined innumerable ways of salvation from mortality or death. Judaism and Christianity, too, developed their own soteriological models.<sup>1</sup> Thus, the biblical text already offers a variety

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<sup>1</sup> Jean-Pierre Jossua, *Le Salut, incarnation ou mystère pascal, chez les Pères de l'Église de saint Irénée à saint Léon le Grand* (Paris: Cerf, 1968); Alfredo Brontesi, *La soteria in Clemente Alessandrino* (Rome: Università gregoriana, 1972); Jerome P. Theisen, *The Ultimate Church and the Promise of Salvation* (Collegeville, MN: St. John's University Press, 1976); Basil Studer and Brian Daley, *Soteriologie in der Schrift und Patristik* (Freiburg: Herder, 1978); Dietrich Wiederkehr, *Belief in Redemption: Concepts of Salvation from the New Testament to the Present Time*, trans. Jeremy Moiser (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1979); Raymund Schwager, *Der wunderbare Tausch: Zur Geschichte und Deutung der Erlösungslehre* (München: Kösel, 1986); Jürgen Werbick, *Soteriologie* (Düsseldorf: Patmos Verlag, 1990); Crispin H.T. Fletcher-Louis, *Luke-Acts: Angels, Christology and Soteriology*, WUNT 2/94 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997); Ed

of salvific metaphors and languages such as the salvation history of the Son of Man, pecuniary-redemptional terminologies, juridical vocabularies, sacrificial idioms, liturgical theories, and theophanic perspectives. These languages do not construct logical-philosophical systems of premises and conclusions, but they elaborate a text as a semantic net gravitating around such titles and metaphors as “glory” and the Lord of Glory, “fight” and Divine Warrior, “sacrifice” and Divine Victim, and “redemption” and Divine Savior. This type of semantic construction, I argue in this section, will be employed by paschal theology to portray Christ as Glory, Savior, Heavenly Priest, Divine Image, and Divine Warrior.

Sacrificial and liturgical views on salvation enjoy a preeminent place in Jewish and Christian cultures. In this context, the festivals of Pesach and Pascha play a central role among the liturgical practices which characterized the end of the Second Temple and early Christian centuries. One of the most ancient features of the Pesach/Pascha feast, the sacrifice of the lamb brings salvation into the houses of the Jewish people in Egypt. Subsequently, the feast continues in the Promised Land or in its long-lasting diaspora. With its roots vanishing in the agricultural rites of the Semitic tribes before the construction of the First Temple, the sacrificial dimension of the Pesach is an obvious matter.<sup>2</sup> For Christians, as well, the sacrificial facet of the Pascha remains essential, though nuances are different.<sup>3</sup> As Paul already affirms in his First Epistle to the Corinthians—and all paschal homilies and tractates will inherit this perspective—Christ is the paschal lamb sacrificed for the

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Condra, *Salvation for the Righteous Revealed: Jesus amid Covenantal and Messianic Expectations in Second Temple Judaism* (Leiden: Brill, 2002); Stephan Schaede, *Stellvertretung: Begriffsgeschichtliche Studien zur Soteriologie* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004); Jan G. van der Watt, ed., *Salvation in The New Testament: Perspectives on Soteriology*, NovTSup 121 (Leiden: Brill, 2005).

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, Gaster, *Passover*; Segal, *Hebrew Passover*; Le Déaut, *La Nuit Pascale*; Huber, *Passa und Ostern*; Haag, *Vom alten zum neuen Pascha*; Haran, “The Passover Sacrifice”; Baruch M. Bokser, *The Origins of the Seder: The Passover Rite and Early Rabbinic Judaism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984); Roger T. Beckwith and Martin J. Selman, eds., *Sacrifice in the Bible* (Carlisle, U.K.: Paternoster Press; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1995); Bradshaw and Hoffman, *Passover and Easter*; Samuel E. Loewenstamm, *The Evolution of Exodus Tradition*, trans. Baruch J. Schwartz (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1999); Federico M. Colautti, *Passover in the Works of Josephus* (Leiden: Brill, 2002); Ed Noort and Eibert Tigheelaar, eds., *The Sacrifice of Isaac: The Aqedah (Genesis 22) and Its Interpretations* (Leiden: Brill, 2002); Tamara Prosic, *The Development and Symbolism of Passover until 70 CE* (London: T & T Clark, 2004); Omri Boehm, *The Binding of Isaac: A Religious Model of Disobedience* (London: T&T Clark, 2007).

<sup>3</sup> See Talley, “Pascha the Center of the Liturgical Year,” 1–70.

salvation of the whole human race.<sup>4</sup> The main changes in the Christian Pascha, therefore, are the identification of Christ with the paschal lamb, present in Paul, and the idea that Christ, as Yahweh Sabaoth (the Lord of Hosts), descended on earth and sacrificed himself for the salvation of humankind.

Nevertheless, beyond this traditional understanding of paschal soteriology as the sacrifice of the lamb, I will propose four new paschal soteriological models which do not begin by envisioning Christ as lamb but as a human-like and glorious figure; therefore continuing the arguments made in the first part of this study. These four proposed models are as follows: glory soteriology, liturgical soteriology, *eikonic* soteriology, and the combat myth paradigm (an ancient language reconceived within the paschal sacrificial framework). According to this last model, the paschal Christ is both a warrior and a self-sacrificial, celestial figure.

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<sup>4</sup> For Paul, see 1Cor 5:7: "Christ our Pascha has been sacrificed (τὸ πάσχα ἡμῶν ἐτύθη Χριστός)."



## CHAPTER THREE

### GLORY/*KABOD* CHRISTOLOGY AND SOTERIOLOGY

Previous scholars have undertaken seminal investigations concerning the paschal or Pesach messianic expectations present in both Christian and Jewish rabbinic documents as well as Hebrew Scriptures and pseudepigraphic writings.<sup>1</sup> This chapter, however, intends to analyze the same festival from a particular methodological angle; namely, the apocalyptic one, and investigate the special theme of the divine glory, or *kabod*, in two of its key aspects: the tradition regarding the salvific function of the *kabod* and its spatial descent. I would call this conception about salvation “glory soteriology” or “*kabod* soteriology,” and I would point out that its roots may be found in the old priestly speculations of the First Temple.

The glory soteriology, one of the most ancient themes of the Pesach theology, will be preserved in the later Christian and rabbinical theologies of Pascha and Pesach. This chapter argues, first, that both early rabbinic materials on Pesach and early Christian paschal homilies of Asia Minor testify to the expectation of the divine glory at the time of the Pesach/Pascha festival. The main rationale for this expectation consists in the salvific function of the divine *kabod*, while the festival of Pesach/Pascha is the privileged time for the divine descent and manifestation. Since the same expectation may be also encountered in some of the Jewish documents of the Second Temple period ascribed to Philo, the present chapter argues as well that the rabbinic and Christian expectations of the divine glory stand for two different developments of a previous theologico-liturgical vision belonging to the Second Temple festival of Pesach.

One may also examine these materials from a mystical angle, in which they seem to reflect the existence of a form of mysticism which engages

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, August Strobel, “Zum Verständnis Von Mt XXV 1–13,” *NT* 2 (1958): 199–227; idem, “Die Passa-Erwartung als urchristliches Problem in Lc 17 20f.,” *ZNW* 49 (1958): 157–196; idem, “Passa-Symbolik und Passa-Wunder in Act. xii. 3 ff.,” *NTS* 4 (1958): 210–215; idem, *Untersuchungen zum eschatologischen Verzögerungsproblem* (Leiden: Brill, 1961); and R. Le Déaut, *La nuit pascale: Essai sur la signification de la Pâque juive à partir du Targum d'Exode XII 42* (Rome: Institute biblique pontifical, 1963).



a whole community, not simply an individual. They belong to that category of “group mysticism” which can be associated with the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice or Christian liturgies. Pascha was therefore a community-centered, and not individual, form of mysticism. This form is one in which the liturgical celebration consisted in several prescribed steps preparing a real mystical experience.

### 1. GLORY SOTERIOLOGY AT THE PASCHAL FESTIVALS OF ASIA MINOR

Appropriating the New Testament identification of Jesus Christ with the divine *kabod*, as we will address later in this section, Christian paschal theology will develop it as one of its innermost tenets. Melito and Pseudo-Hippolytus associate the festival of Pascha with the descent of the heavenly Christ as glory (δόξα). Melito, for instance, writes:

[T]he temple below was precious, but it is worthless now because of the Christ above. The Jerusalem below was precious, but it is worthless now because of the Jerusalem above .... For it is not in one place (τόπος) nor in a little plot that the glory (δόξα) of God is established (καθίδρυσται), but on all the ends of the inhabited earth his bounty overflows, and there the almighty God has made his dwelling (κατεσκήνωκεν) through Christ Jesus.<sup>2</sup>

This passage recalls the text of Revelation 21, which records a vision of the heavenly Jerusalem descending to earth. Melito’s distinct approach consists in the fact that Christ’s divine descent as glory is not temporally situated at the end of time but in a well-specified present moment, “now” (νῦν—emphatically repeated in the previous verses), which may refer either to the paschal time when the homilist performs his oration or to the era following Jesus’ incarnation. The divine *kabod*, usually represented as sitting on the heavenly throne, appears in the homily as indwelling the entire earth and overflowing beyond earth’s boundaries. Melito articulates his discourse on Pascha in terms and images related to Christ’s manifestation in history: first within the events of the Old Testament (the types), and then in terms and images related to Christ’s incarnation and historical acts (the antitypes):

It is he who, coming from heaven to the earth because of the suffering one, and clothing himself in that same one through a virgin’s womb, and coming forth

<sup>2</sup> Melito, *PP* 44–45, 288–299.

a man, accepted the passions of the suffering one through the body which was able to suffer, and dissolved the passions of the flesh; and by the Spirit which could not die he killed death the killer of men.<sup>3</sup>

In a different passage, which is almost identical with the saying found in *Mishnah Pesahim* 10.5, Melito projects the ideas of light and salvation on the paschal event:

It is he that delivered us from slavery to liberty, from darkness to light, from death to life, from tyranny to eternal royalty, and made us a new priesthood and an eternal people personal to him. He is the Pascha of our salvation.<sup>4</sup>

The second document, *In sanctum Pascha*, begins with the following words:

Now is it the time when the blessed light of Christ sheds its rays; the pure rays (φωστῆρες) of the pure Spirit rise and the heavenly treasures of divine glory (δόξα) are opened up. Night's darkness and obscurity have been swallowed up, and the dense blackness dispersed in this light of day; crabbed death has been totally eclipsed. Life has been extended (ἐφηπλώθη) to every creature and all things are diffused in brightness (φῶς). The dawn of dawn ascends over the earth (ἀνατολαὶ ἀνατολῶν ἐπέχουσι τὸ πᾶν) and he who was before the morning star and before the other stars, the mighty (μέγας) Christ, immortal and mighty (πολύς), sheds light brighter than the sun on the universe.<sup>5</sup>

The passage undeniably confides mysterious information regarding the descent of the divine light at the time of the paschal celebration. Most likely equating Pascha and incarnation, the author envisions them as the event of Christ's coming (ἐπιδημία), which dissolves the border between heaven and earth and makes the divine glory—stored in heaven from the first day of creation—flood the whole universe:<sup>6</sup> “the heavenly treasures of the divine glory (δόξα) are opened up.”<sup>7</sup> The light of Jesus' divine glory (δόξα), which illumines the heavenly Jerusalem in Revelation 21, is now spread over the entire cosmos: “... the blessed light of Christ sheds its rays ... [T]he mighty Christ, immortal and mighty, sheds light brighter than the sun on the universe (τὸ πᾶν).”<sup>8</sup>

<sup>3</sup> *PP* 66.451–458; cf. *PP* 46–47.303–310.

<sup>4</sup> *PP* 68.473–480. Stuart G. Hall has studied this Melitonian passage in parallel with two Jewish texts; namely, *Mishnah Pesahim* 10.5 and *Exodus Rabbah* 12.2 (see Hall, “Melito in the Light of the Passover Haggadah,” *JTS* 22 [1971]: 29–46).

<sup>5</sup> Pseudo-Hippolytus, *IP* 1.1.

<sup>6</sup> The text presents the incarnation as both a coming (ἐπιδημία, *IP* 43–44) of Christ—who is the eternal Priest, the King of glory, and the Lord of the powers (*IP* 46)—and a compression of the magnitude of his divinity in a human form (*IP* 45).

<sup>7</sup> Pseudo-Hippolytus, *IP* 1.1.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

Expressed through glory terminology, the Pascha is an event not much distinct from Christ's incarnation (better phrased, in Pseudo-Hippolytus's terms, as his "coming"). Nevertheless, we have to connect this inaugurated eschatology with the early Christian tradition according to which the Parousia, Jesus' second coming in glory and the presumed end of the world, will take place during a paschal night. Early Christian communities linked the paschal expectation of the divine *kabod*, or even identified it, with the expectation of the Parousia. For instance, Tertullian affirms that the Parousia will likely occur during the celebration of Pentecost, fifty days after Pascha.<sup>9</sup> While *Epistula apostolorum* 17 places the same eschatological event between the festival of Azymes and the Pentecost, the Vatican codex of the *Gospel of the Hebrews* unveils that the final judgment will take place during the eight paschal days.<sup>10</sup> In the same line of thought, two of the most significant testimonies regarding the paschal expectation are preserved in Lactantius and Jerome. In his *Divinae institutiones*, written after 313 CE, Lactantius states that Christians celebrate the paschal night by a vigil because they expect the coming (*aduentum*) of the king and God.<sup>11</sup> In a similar, although more obvious way, Jerome affirms in his *Commentary on Matthew* 4.25.6 that, according to a Jewish tradition, Christ will come during the night of Pascha as he also came in ancient Egypt, again during the night and following the Angel of Death. According to Jerome, this particular expectation constituted the theological reason for the "apostolic tradition" of not dismissing the community before midnight during the celebration of the Pascha.

## 2. PASSOVER NIGHT AND RABBINIC EXPECTATIONS OF THE DIVINE GLORY

One of the Mishnahic sayings ascribed to Rabbi Gamaliel, an adage later taken over into the final prayer of the Haggadah for Pesach, depicts the Passover as a passage from darkness to light and from servitude to salvation: "He has brought us from bondage to freedom, from sadness to joy, from mourning to festivity, from darkness to light, and from servitude to redemption."<sup>12</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Tertullian, *De baptismo* 19.2.

<sup>10</sup> Cod. Vat. Reg. Lat. 49, from R. Cantalamessa, *La Pâque dans l'Eglise ancienne* (Berne: Peter Lang, 1980), 30.

<sup>11</sup> Lactantius, *Inst.* 7.19.3: *Haec est nox quae a nobis propter adventum regis ac dei nostri pervigilio celebratur*; see S. Brandt's edition, CSEL 19 (Prague 1890), 645.

<sup>12</sup> *Pesah.* 10.5. Cf. E. Daniel Goldschmidt, *The Passover Haggadah: Its Sources and History* (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1960). See also *m. Exod. Rab.* 12:2.

Another rabbinic document, *Codex Neofiti* 1, makes obvious the expectation of the divine glory during the night of Passover. This targum changes the biblical text of Exod 12:23 (“For the Lord will pass through to strike down the Egyptians”) to the following form:

And the Glory of the Shekinah of the Lord (איקר שכינתיה דיי) will pass to blot out the Egyptians; and he will see the blood upon the lintel and upon the two doorposts and he will pass by, and the *Memra* (מימריה דיי) of the Lord will defend the door of the fathers of the children of Israel.<sup>13</sup>

The text inserts a new character, the *Memra* (מימר) or the Word of Yahweh, into the paschal narrative. Likewise, it is worth noting the adjustment of Exod 12:12–13 from the biblical form “for I will pass through the land of Egypt that night; ... I am the Lord. ... [W]hen I see the blood, I will pass over you” to the targumic “I will pass in my *Memra* (מימר) through the land of Egypt this night of the Passover .... I in my *Memra* will defend you.”<sup>14</sup> For the targumic writer, the divine agent is no longer Yahweh but the Word of Yahweh or Yahweh through his Word.

The targumic passage corresponding to Exod 12:42 identifies the Word (*Memra*) with the Light of the first day of creation and recapitulates Yahweh’s gradual manifestation within the history of the world.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>13</sup> *Tg. Neof. 12:23*, in Martin McNamara and Robert Hayward, *Targum Neofiti 1: Exodus*, vol. 2 of *The Aramaic Bible. The Targums* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1994), 49. For the Aramaic text, see Alexandro Diez Macho, *Neophiti 1: Targum Palestinense Ms de la Biblioteca Vaticana, Tomo II Exodo*, trans. Martin McNamara and Michael Maher (Madrid-Barcelona: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1970), 439. See also Jastrow, 775: מימר, מאמר, or מימרא = “word, command.” Likewise, שכינה, שכינתיה, or שכינתיה in some editions means “royal residence, royalty, glory, divine glory.” (Jastrow, 1573).

<sup>14</sup> *Tg. Neof. 12:12–13*, in McNamara, *Targum Neofiti 1*, 47–48 and Macho, 437. For the various theories regarding the contexts of the Palestinian and Babylonian Targums, the traditions that they preserve, and their mutual influences, see Roger Le Déaut and Jacques Robert, “Targum,” *Supplément au Dictionnaire de la Bible* (Paris: Letouzey & Ané, 2002), 52–54. Generally, there are three hypotheses: *Tg. Ps-J.* is a document revised after *Tg. Onq.*: P. Kahle (1959), G. Vermes (1959–1960), G.J. Cowling (1968), S.A. Kaufman. On the contrary, the second hypothesis considers *Tg. Onq.* as a revised version of an ancient *Tg. Ps-J.*: Vermes (1963), P. Schäfer (1971–1972), G.E. Kuiper (1968 and 1972), R.T. White (1981). The third hypothesis proposes a common source *Proto-Onq.* or *Proto-TP.*: A. Berliner (1884), White (1981), Le Déaut (2002).

<sup>15</sup> This text can be correlated with John 1:4–9 (esp. 9) and *IP* 1.1. Thus, it can be supposed that the Christian and Jewish communities developed various speculations about the divine light of the first day of creation and its presence within the created universe. These speculations may further be connected with the later Byzantine interest in the uncreated light or grace and their manifestations within creation.

The first night: when the Lord was revealed over the world to create it. The world was without form and void, and darkness was spread over the face of the abyss and the Memra (ממריה רייה) of the Lord was the Light (נהורא), and it shone; and he called it the *First Night*. The *second night*: when the Lord was revealed to Abram .... The *third night*: when the Lord was revealed against the Egyptians at midnight: his hand slew the first-born of the Egyptians and his right hand protected the first-born of Israel .... The *fourth night*: When the world reaches its appointed time to be redeemed: the iron yokes shall be broken [cf. Isa 9:4; 10:27 etc. and Jer 28:2–14], and the generations of wickedness shall be blotted out, and Moses will go up from the desert (and the king Messiah (מלכא משיחא) from the midst of Rome.) ... and his Memra (ממר) will lead between the two of them, and I and they will proceed together. This is the night of the Passover to the name of the Lord [cf. Exod 12:11]; it is a night reserved and set aside for the redemption of all Israel, throughout their generations.<sup>16</sup>

All four manifestations of God in four different nights of the history of the world reflect the gradual illumination of creation accomplished in the final appearance of the Word at the eschaton, when he will come in the company of Moses and the Messiah. While the Word is identified at the beginning of the fragment with the light of the first day of creation, the Word will reveal himself at the end of the world during the night of the Passover. Consequently, the *Targum Neofiti 1* preserves a special tradition in which the end of the actual world and the beginning of the eschatological one will take place during the paschal night.<sup>17</sup>

With slight variations, to the same line of thought found in *Neofiti 1*, the *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* on Exodus changes Exod 12:11–12, “and you shall eat it [the lamb] hurriedly. It is the Passover of the Lord. For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night,” to the following:

And you shall eat in the *haste* of the Shekinah (שכינת) of the Lord of the world, because it is a mercy from before the Lord for you. On that night I will be revealed in the land of Egypt in the Shekinah (שכינת) of my Glory (יקרי), and with me there will be ninety thousand myriads of destroying angels.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>16</sup> *Tg. Neof. 12:42*, in McNamara, *Targum Neofiti 1*, 52–53; Macho, 441–442. It is worth mentioning that, in Macho's edition, McNamara preferred to translate מן גו רימא with “from on high” instead of “from the midst of Rome.” He is in agreement with Macho's “de lo alto” (Macho, 78) and Le Déaut's “d'en-haut” (Macho, 313). See also Le Déaut's classical study on the theme of the four nights, *La nuit pascale*.

<sup>17</sup> Compare with the Christian documents mentioned above. Cf. Hippolytus, *Comm. Dan* 4:55 ff.

<sup>18</sup> *Tg. Ps-J. 12:11–12*, in Michael Maher, *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan: Exodos*, vol. 2 of *The Aramaic Bible: The Targums* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1994), 191. Cf. John W.

Once again, glory language finds its way into the paschal discourse. A few lines later, in 12:23, the glory (יקרא) is the agent which strikes the Egyptians, while the “*Memra* (מִמְרָא) of the Lord will protect the door and will not allow the Destroying Angel to enter and smite your houses.”<sup>19</sup> The passage does not make clear whether it is the glory or the destroying angel that strikes the Egyptian first-born. The same chapter of the targum, however, introduces a third destroying agent, the Word of Yahweh: “In the middle of the night of the fifteenth (of Nisan) the *Memra* (מִמְרָא) of the Lord slew all the first-born in the land of Egypt.”<sup>20</sup> Since the *Babylonian Targum* does not use glory language when discussing the Passover, it follows that glory language reflects a Palestinian development.

These materials lead us to the conclusion that several rabbinic writings associate the festival of Pesach with the expectation of a salvific theophany, whether of Yahweh, or of his Word or Light, or that of his *Shekinah*. Consequently, we may also regard this tradition as *kabod* soteriology.

### 3. THE ORIGINS OF *KABOD* SOTERIOLOGY

The scholars who investigated the origins of the Jewish festival of Pesach have not reached a definite conclusion concerning the time when the theme of the divine light became part of the Passover symbolism. While historians still debate whether the festival's origins were nomadic, semi-nomadic, pastoral, or agricultural, the concept of salvation from the Egyptian slavery appears to be a later addition.<sup>21</sup> Tamara Prosic generally views the light as “a

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Etheridge, *The Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan Ben Uzziel on the Pentateuch with the Fragments of the Jerusalem Targum* (New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1968), 457. See also the manuscript *Add. 27031* of *Tg. Ps-J.*, from the British Museum, in Roger Le Déaut, *Targum du Pentateuque: Tome II, Exode et Lévitique*, SC 256 (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1979), 87. For the Aramaic text, see M. Ginsburger, *Pseudo-Jonathan: Thargum Jonathan ben Uziel zum Pentateuch* (Berlin: S. Calvary & Co., 1903) or David Rieder, *Pseudo-Jonathan: Targum Jonathan ben Uziel on the Pentateuch Copied from the London MS [British Museum Add. 27031]* (Jerusalem: Solomon's, 1974) and Ernest G. Clarke, *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan of the Pentateuch: Text and Concordance* (Hoboken, New Jersey: Ktav, 1984). For יקרא, יקירו, or יקרי, which means “honor,” “dignity,” see Jastrow, *A Dictionary*, 592.

<sup>19</sup> *Tg. Ps-J.* 12:23; cf. Etheridge, *Targums*, 476–477.

<sup>20</sup> *Tg. Ps-J.* 12:29; cf. Etheridge, *Targums*, 447. It is worth mentioning that the agent of punishment in *Tg. Onq.* and *Tg. Neof.*, in accordance with Exod 12:29, is Yahweh.

<sup>21</sup> Prosic makes a general review of the previous theories concerning the origins of the Passover festival (*Development*, 19–32). She argues that recent scholarship has discarded the nomadic theory in the history of early Israel (*ibid.*, 32). Moreover, she supports the idea of a unique origin of the festivals of Passover, Unleavened Bread, and Sheaf (*ibid.*, 69).

sign of the act of creation” in opposition to the dark powers of the primordial chaos.<sup>22</sup> Celebrated in the first month at the vernal equinox, Pascha becomes a nucleus of symbols encompassing all the positive meanings associated with the sun and the new harvest: from order and creation to salvation and perfection.<sup>23</sup>

The connection between the vision of the divine light and the idea of salvation was an old credence in ancient Israel, as some of the proto-Isaianic oracles already indicate. Thus, the roots of *kabod* soteriology appear to go back to the pre-exilic period.<sup>24</sup> A passage such as Isa 9:2–3 is most likely part of an oracle related to the Assyrian invasion between 734 and 732 BCE, when Tiglath-Pileser III annexed three Samarian provinces to Assyria: the Way of the Sea, Trans-Jordan, and Galilee of the nations (i.e., Dor, Megiddo, and Gilead):<sup>25</sup>

The people who walked in darkness (חשך) have seen a great light (אור); those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them light (אור) has shined. You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before (פנים = face) you.<sup>26</sup>

Such proto-Isaianic oracles reveal a large and “democratic” accessibility to the vision of the divine glory, which was perhaps a general expectation

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 99–100.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 83–97. A similar perspective may be encountered in Le Déaut who explains the later rabbinic symbolism of the Pesach in these terms: “Si la Pâque (et l’Exode) est décrite comme une sorte de création nouvelle, celle-ci s’accompagnera, comme la première, de la victoire de la lumière sur les ténèbres du chaos” (Le Déaut, *La nuit*, 232).

<sup>24</sup> According to Mark Smith, solar language, a common element of the Near East as early as the second millennium, evolved in ancient Israel in a first stage as a general terminology for theophanic luminosity. In a second stage, monarchy played an important influence in associating solar symbolisms with Yahweh (Smith, “The Near Eastern Background of the Solar Language for Yahweh,” *JBL* 109:1 [1990]: 29–39). Cf. Segal, *Hebrew*; Prosci, *Development*; H.P. Stähli, *Solare Elemente im Jahwerglauben des Alten Testaments*, OBO 66 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1985); Birgit Langer, *Gott als “Licht” in Israel und Mesopotamien: Eine Studie zu Jes. 60:1–3.19f.*, ÖBS 7 (Klosterneuburg: Verlag Österreichisches Katholische Bibelwerk, 1989); and J. Glen Taylor, *Yahweh and the Sun: Biblical and Archaeological Evidence for Sun Worship in Ancient Israel* (Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1993). See also the authors from the next footnote.

<sup>25</sup> Edward D. Kissane, *The Book of Isaiah* (Dublin: The Richview Press, 1960), 104. Ronald E. Clements, *Isaiah 1–39* (London: Marshal, Morgan & Scott, 1980), 34; John D.W. Watts, *Isaiah 1–33* as vol. 24 of *World Biblical Commentary* (Waco, TX: World Books, 1985), 133–134; John J. Collins, *Isaiah* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1986), 106; Hans Wildberger, *Isaiah 1–12: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 394.

<sup>26</sup> Isa 9:2–3.

of the whole people of Israel. The meaning of this accessibility to the divine glory is rooted in its salvific power. Therefore, Isa 9:2–3 should be seen as one of the first testimonies of the connection between the vision of God's glory and the manifestation of his salvific power. Other passages with the same soteriological emphasis, either in the Isaianic texts or in psalms, seem to be a later, post-exilic development.

The prophetic text makes a reference in its ninth chapter to a certain future time, when the people of Israel will be saved from the Assyrian oppression and will be elevated to the highest and happiest possible status: to live in the light (אור) of Yahweh and to see his face (פנים). The well-known Jewish tradition which identifies God's glory with his face reappears in this context. Subsequent verses proclaim that the salvific status will not be a mere temporary fact, but an event extended without limits into the future. It will be a kingdom of Davidic descent led by a child who is an "everlasting father (אביעד)" (9:6), a kingdom of "endless peace (שלום אין קץ)" where justice and righteousness will rule "from this time onward and forevermore (עד)" (9:7). All of these descriptions of the future salvation actually point to a certain eschatological dimension.

According to the Isaianic author, the people of God will acquire in the eschatological times the luminous or glorious characteristics of Yahweh. While Isa 6:3 depicts Yahweh as "luminous/holy," "Holy (קדוש), Holy, Holy, is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory (כבוד),"<sup>27</sup> Isa 4:2 ascribes the same attribute to the eschatological human condition: "On that day the branch of the Lord (Yahweh) shall be beautiful and glorious (כבוד)." The glory is also a central feature of the soteriological geography in which special earthly and sacred places, such as the mount of Zion or the city of Jerusalem, represent the inhabited domains of salvation:

Whoever is left in Zion and remains in Jerusalem will be called holy (קדוש), everyone who has been recorded for life in Jerusalem... The Lord will create over the whole site of Mount Zion and over its places of assembly a cloud by day and smoke and a shining (גה) of a flaming fire by night. Indeed over all the glory (כבוד) there will be a canopy.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>27</sup> קדש does not have only the meaning of "separated," which is probably a later development; its root—קד—also carries the meaning of "bright," an adjective especially connected with divinity and the things related to the divine; cf. Walter Kornfeld and Helmer Ringgren, "קדש qdš," *TDOT* 12:521–545.

<sup>28</sup> Isa 4:3–5. Cf. Isa 28:5: "In that day the LORD of hosts will be a garland of glory (צבי), and a diadem of beauty (תפארה = also "glory," "splendor"), to the remnant of his people." Cf. Isa 33:20–21. Another ancient text, the passage of Exodus 15, generally called the Song at the Sea,



Later in the text, in Isa 46:13—a verse considered being part of the deutero-Isaianic corpus—one can find an even clearer correlation of salvation, glory, and a particular geography of salvation: “I will put salvation (תְּשׁוּעָה) in Zion, for Israel my glory (תְּפָאֲרָתִי).”

The idea of sacred geography is usually significant for any religious form of life. A sacred place is a center of the world for a particular religious community, and its existence implies such attitudes as inquiries of the sacred, pilgrimages, processions, and festivals.<sup>29</sup> The theme of procession towards the divine light may be encountered in Isa 2:5: “O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the Lord.” A key text where the notions of “light” and “salvation” start being connected with a certain festival for Yahweh is Isa 33:20–22, written probably at the time of the Second Temple:

Look on Zion, the city of our appointed festivals! Your eyes will see Jerusalem, a quiet habitation, an immovable tent, whose stakes will never be pulled up, and none of whose ropes will be broken. But there the LORD in majesty (אֲדִיר) will be for us a place of broad rivers and streams, where no galley with oars can go, nor stately ship can pass. For the LORD is our judge, The LORD is our ruler, the LORD is our king; he will save (יִשַׁע) us.

Additionally, the book of Psalms discloses a similar perspective of salvation in the glory of Yahweh, as we may see, for example, in Psalm 68. The context of Psalm 68 does not appear to be a part of the ordinary Temple service, as found in passages such as Psalms 26, 27, 63:2, or 99. Rather, one may posit that Psalm 68 relates to a special festival where an embedded procession represents a key ingredient of the celebration:

O God (אֱלֹהִים), when you went out before your people, when you marched through the wilderness, the earth quaked, the heavens poured down rain at the presence (פְּנִיִם) of God, the God of Sinai, at the presence (פְּנִיִם) of God, the God of Israel ... Your solemn processions (הַלִּיכָה) are seen, O God, the processions of my God, my King, into the sanctuary (קֹדֶשׁ)—the singers in front, the musicians last, between them girls playing tambourines.

While in Ps 67:1–2, 80:3, and 80:7 God’s shining face or presence (פְּנִיִם) procures salvation (יְשׁוּעָה), Psalm 104 makes clear that the manifestation

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conceives of salvation as an eternal dwelling in Yahweh’s sacred sanctuary; Exod 15:17–18: “You brought them and planted them in the mountain of your own possession, the place (מְכוּן), O Lord (Yahweh), that you made your abode (יָשַׁב), the sanctuary (מִקְדָּשׁ), O Lord, that your hands have established. The Lord will reign forever and ever (עַד).”

<sup>29</sup> See Eliade, *Patterns in Comparative Religion*; idem, *The Sacred and the Profane*; idem, *Images and Symbols: Studies in Religious Symbolism*, trans. Philip Mairet (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1961).

of פנים is the way God grants life to all creatures.<sup>30</sup> To conclude this particular analysis, the main significance of the *visio Dei* in the Isaianic and Psalmic corpora is the salvation of the people of Jerusalem. For this reason, the expectation of the *visio Dei* becomes a key social-soteriological feature. Sverre Aalen reaches the same conclusion while analyzing the function of theophanies in the Old Testament: “The primary purpose of the theophany of God is the deliverance and salvation of the nation and of the individual.”<sup>31</sup>

The manifestation of God’s glory in the books of Isaiah and Psalms may certainly include other functions. Such functions may include the manifestation of divine knowledge, law, kingship, and judgment as well as the punishment of enemies. The punitive role, for example, is strongly tied to the idea of salvation, insofar as Yahweh himself is the agent of salvation in the liberation from the enemies’ oppression. While encountering his glory, the enemies of his people “enter into the rock, and hide in the dust from the terror of the Lord (Yahweh), and from the glory (הדר) of His majesty (גאון)” (Isa 2:10). The same expression, “from the terror of the Lord (Yahweh) and from the glory (הדר) of His majesty (גאון),” occurs in Isa 2:19 and 2:21. Thematically, it appears in various other passages, although is expressed differently. As Ps 104:1 articulates, the terms of הוד (splendor) and הדר (majesty) seem to refer to Yahweh’s garments.

To reiterate the points made thus far, the evidence confirms that the connection between salvation and the vision of the divine glory enjoys a venerable history, one most likely conveyed as early as the time of the First Temple. Moreover, some texts pertaining to the Second Temple era—for example, Isaiah 33 and Psalm 68—illustrate the connection between these two ideas and some of the historical Jewish festivals.

Of further concern is an interesting element regarding the original location of the divine *kabod* and its spatial movements. Such “movements” presuppose the idea that salvation involves a particular migration of the divine glory from its original location to the place where the glory enacts its salvific

<sup>30</sup> Ps 104:29–31: “You hide your face (פנים), they [the living creatures] are dismayed; when you take away their breath (רוח), they die and return to their dust. You send forth your spirit (רוח), they are created; and you renew the face (פנים) of the ground. Let the glory (כבוד) of the Lord (Yahweh) endure forever.”

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Aalen, *TDOT* 1:165. On page 161, Aalen has the following remark: “The situation is the same when the OT speaks of ‘the light of Yahweh’ (Isa 2:5), ‘his (God’s) light’ or ‘lamp’ (Job 29:3), or in the same sense, of ‘the light’ (Ps 36:10[9]; 43:3). Here too light is to be understood as a symbol not of God’s person, but of the salvation which God gives.”

operations through direct manifestation. Biblical references reflect two trajectories. The first of these—present in such texts as Isa 2:3–5 and Ezekiel 1, 8, and 10—refers to an earthly location as the original dwelling of the divine glory; for instance, the Temple of Jerusalem. In this case, salvation represents a horizontal movement.<sup>32</sup> The second trajectory implies the divine *kabod*'s descent from heaven. One may examine the passage reporting the consecration of Solomon's Temple as an illustration of this idea:

When Solomon had ended his prayer, fire came down from heaven (האש ירדה) and consumed the burned offering and the sacrifices; and the glory (כבוד; δόξα) of the Lord filled the temple. The priests could not enter the house of the Lord, because the glory (כבוד; δόξα) of the Lord filled the Lord's house. When all the people of Israel saw the fire come down and the glory (כבוד; δόξα) of the Lord on the temple, they bowed down on the pavement with their faces to the ground, and worshiped and gave thanks to the Lord.<sup>33</sup>

#### 4. THE SECOND TEMPLE PASSOVER AND THE EXPECTATION OF THE DIVINE LIGHT

The next question this chapter intends to address concerns the time period in which the two ideas of salvation and the vision of the divine light begin being associated with the festival of Pesach. To this point, several of the writings ascribed to Philo of Alexandria support the assumption that the connection was already a fact at the time of the Second Temple. In *De specialibus legibus*, while describing the “ten feasts which are recorded in the law,”<sup>34</sup> Philo shows why the Pascha falls on the fifteenth day of the first month. He argues its relationship to light: at that time light is an uninterrupted phenomenon of two days. The sun enlightens the day of

<sup>32</sup> However, Isa 2:3–5 presents the salvific action of the *kabod* more as a descent rather than a horizontal movement, because the Temple is placed on a mountain and, in a very concrete way, salvation takes place when Yahweh's glory descends from the mountain. See also Deut 33:2: “The Lord came from Sinai and shone forth from Seir. He appeared from Mount Paran.”

<sup>33</sup> 2 Chr 7:1–3. Likewise, in the paradigmatic theophany on Mount Sinai, Moses sees Yahweh descending on the mount in order to write down the commandments. See Exod 19:11: “the Lord (יהוה) will come down (ירד, καταβήσεται) upon Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people;” 34:5: “The Lord descended (ירד, κατέβη) in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name, ‘The Lord.’”

<sup>34</sup> Philo, *Spec.* 2.41: δέκα ἑορταί, ἃς ἀναγράφει ὁ νόμος.

the fourteenth, while the moon, the night of the fifteenth. In our modern calendar, the day of the fourteenth and the night of the fourteenth to the fifteenth:

The feast begins at the middle of the month, on the fifteenth day, when the moon is full, a day purposely chosen because then there is no darkness, but everything is continuously lighted up (φωτὸς ἀνάπλεα πάντα διὰ πάντων) as the sun shines from morning to evening and the moon from evening to morning and while the stars give place to each other no shadow is cast upon their brightness (φέγγος).<sup>35</sup>

The element of light, therefore, is believed to be an important part of the feast of Pascha.

That said, light was not only a physical or cosmological event. It was also an element pertaining to the spiritual domain. Philo explores this topic further in the first part of his treatise *Questions and Answers on Exodus*. The treatise contains a commentary on Exodus 12, the foundational biblical passage for Philo's commentaries on Passover as well as for the targums, rabbinism, and early Christian paschal homilies. The Exodus text presents Yahweh's conversation with Moses and Aaron in which he informs them about his visitation and commands them to further notify the people of Israel to be prepared for such a crucial encounter with God. They must keep aside a chosen lamb for a period of four days and slaughter it afterwards in the twilight of the fourth day. Yahweh will come that night.

Philo's book may be viewed as a first treatise on the paschal tradition which already involves two levels of interpretation of this theophanic text. While Philo envisions the Passover as the "passage" from the sensible to the intelligible realm—that is, from the literal meaning (τὸ ῥητόν) of the text to its deeper sense according to reason (τὸ πρὸς διάνοιαν)—Christian homilists will employ a christological typology and emphasize the passage from the old to the new Pascha.<sup>36</sup> Philo engages each chapter methodically, starting with an initial, literal reading and then continuing with a second understanding, which is an intelligible or dianoetical explanation. At this second

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<sup>35</sup> *Spec.* 2.155. Cf. *QE* 1.9 on Exod 12:6a: "Why does He command (them) to keep the sacrifice until the fourteenth (day of the month)? ... For when it has become full on the fourteenth (day), it becomes full of light in the perception of the people."

<sup>36</sup> *QE* 1.4. The soul and the mind have to pass from their vicious function to the virtuous one, and ultimately the soul has to overcome the body, the mind has to overcome the senses, while the thoughts have to become prophetic. Cf. *Spec.* 2.147 where the opposite word for τὸ ῥητόν is ἀλληγορία, and the Pascha concerns the purification of the soul.

level, the Passover represents the progress (προκοπή) of the soul. Most likely, the culmination of this process consists in reaching illumination.<sup>37</sup> As such, Philo notes the following:

For when the souls appear bright and visible, their visions begin to hold festival, hoping for a life without sorrow or fear as their lot and seeing the cosmos with the weight of the understanding as full and perfect, in harmony with the decad.<sup>38</sup>

The doctrine can be further summarized using a passage from *De congressu quaerendae eruditionis gratia*, which articulates the idea of paschal spiritual advance by means of such key notions as Passover, progress of the soul, and illumination:

We find this “ten” plainly stated in the story of the soul’s Passover, the crossing (διάβασις) from every passion and all the realm of sense to the tenth, which is the realm of mind and God; for we read “on the tenth day of this month let everyone take a sheep for his house” (Ex. xii.3), and thus beginning with the tenth day we shall sanctify to Him that is tenth the offering fostered in the soul whose face has been illumined (πεφωτισμένη) through two parts out of three, until its whole being becomes a brightness (φέγγος) giving light to the heaven like a full moon by its increase in the second week. And thus it will be able not only to keep safe, but to offer as innocent and spotless victims its advances on the path of progress (προκοπαί).<sup>39</sup>

Conceiving the essence of the paschal festival as the progress (προκοπή) of the soul toward God and illumination, these Philonian passages demonstrate that the expectation of the paschal enlightenment was already a vital tradition during the Second Temple period. One may further note that Philo composed the whole visionary argument in an internalized form: the progress of the soul. Such progress, notes Hans Jonas, is an internalized form of illumination.<sup>40</sup> It is, simply speaking, an analogous way in which one imitates the celebratory ritual of light while advancing internally towards the stage of illumination. This internalized journey towards illumination also

<sup>37</sup> *QE* 1.3; 1.7; and 1.11.

<sup>38</sup> *QE* 1.2. The same perspective is also expressed a few pages further in the eighth chapter: “First it was necessary [for the soul desiring perfection] to pluck out sins and then to wash them out and, being resplendent, to complete the daily (tasks) in the practice of virtue.”

<sup>39</sup> Philo, *Congr.* 106.

<sup>40</sup> Internal progress or advance of the soul represents, according to Hans Jonas, a paradigmatic form of interiorization, an internalized version of the ancient ritual stages of initiation; see Jonas, “Myth and Mysticism: A Study of Objectification and Interiorization in Religious Thought,” *JR* 49 (1969): 315–329, 315–316.

parallels the cosmic growth of the moon from two-thirds on the tenth day of Nissan to the full moon on the fourteenth night. Thus, the Alexandrian outlines the dynamic of human spiritual advancement and the gradual illumination of the soul to the completion of its full brightness (φέγγος) in the context of the Passover festival.<sup>41</sup> This dynamic will be present, in different forms, in Melito, Pseudo-Hippolytus, and Origen.

##### 5. THE MEDIATION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT: IDENTIFYING CHRIST WITH THE DIVINE GLORY (*KABOD*)

The main distinction between the Jewish Pesach and the Christian Pascha is a matter of theology, addressing the Christian identification of Yahweh and of the divine *kabod* with Jesus Christ. This theological distinction is already present in the Christian documents of the first century New Testament era, and several scholars consider it as originating within the liturgical practice of the earliest decades of the Christian movement.<sup>42</sup> This theological position, ascribing a divine or godly nature to Jesus Christ, is usually referred as “high Christology.”

Identifying such “high Christology” can be done through an examination of various New Testament passages. Here, the process of equating Jesus Christ with Yahweh can be encountered, for example, in 1Cor 2:8, where Christ receives the title “Lord of Glory” (Κύριος τῆς δόξης), a designation of Yahweh used throughout the Old Testament. Likewise, Matt 4:13–16 corroborates Christ’s first kerygmatic actions with the salvific intervention of the divine light promised in Isa 9:1–2:

[A]nd leaving Nazareth he went and settled at Capernaum on the sea of Galilee, in the district of Zebulun and Nephtali. This was to fulfill the words of the prophet Isaiah about “the land of Zebulun, the land of Nephtali, the road to the sea, the land beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles:” The people that lived in darkness have seen a great light; light has dawned on those who lived in the land of death’s dark shadow.

<sup>41</sup> For the theme of progressive illumination of the soul in Philo, see also *Spec.* 2.145–149 and *QE* 1.7–8.

<sup>42</sup> See, for example, Larry Hurtado’s *One God, One Lord: Early Christian Devotion and Ancient Jewish Monotheism* (London: T&T Clark, 1998), or *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003) and Richard Bauckham, *God Crucified: Monotheism and Christology in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998).

In addition to this theological trend which identifies Christ with the salvific manifestation of the glory, the interpretation of Isa 7:14 in Matt 1:22–23 illustrates the New Testament community's identification of Mary's baby with a divine character. Thus, in the Gospel according to Matthew one can see an interpretation that equates the newborn Christ with the newborn Emmanuel.

Likewise, Luke's narrative obviously identifies Mary's baby with the Lord of Glory descended to earth as a veiled divine throne (*merkavah*) in 2:8–20. The story portrays the descending angels who came down with him, along with beasts, surrounding the baby as in Ezekiel or Daniel's visions in which celestial beasts surround Yahweh, while the kings from the orient come to kneel before the baby. The same identification of the newborn Jesus with the heavenly glory appears in the Lukan episode narrating the presentation in the Temple (2:29–32). The presentation recounts a story in which the old priest Symeon compares the baby with the glory, therefore with the *kabod* of Israel: "My eyes have seen your salvation which you have prepared before the face of all peoples, a light ( $\phi\omega\varsigma$ ) for revelation to the nations, and the glory ( $\delta\acute{o}\xi\alpha$ ) of your people Israel."<sup>43</sup> I argue, therefore, that it is obvious, once again, that salvation is instantiated through direct intervention of the divine light.

Addressing John's Gospel, one notes the depiction of the event of the incarnation, in glory terminology, as the coming of the divine light. Employing the terms of "Word," "life," and "light" as synonyms in 1:4, in a fashion similar to that in the *Targum Neofiti 1*, the Gospel continues in 1:9 stating, "[t]he true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world." Following the same line of thought, the Gospel testifies in 1:14 that the disciples have seen Christ's glory ( $\delta\acute{o}\xi\alpha$ ), and in 8:12, 9:5, 12:35–36, and 12:46, the Gospel depicts Christ defining himself as the light of the world ( $\tau\acute{o}\ \phi\omega\varsigma\ \tau\omicron\upsilon\ \kappa\acute{o}\sigma\mu\omicron\upsilon$ ) or the light that came into the world. Consequently, as early as the first century CE, Christ's coming to the world was already expressed through glory language and depicted as the descent of the divine *kabod*. Salvation, therefore, was deeply interconnected with the descent of the divine glory.

Lastly, the book of Revelation employs the same image of the salvific glory in its account of the eschatological reality of the heavenly kingdom. Thus, while describing the eschatological Jerusalem, Rev 21:23–24 asserts, "the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God is its light, and its lamp is the Lamb. The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of

<sup>43</sup> I am indebted for this idea to Professor Alexander Golitzin.

the earth will bring their glory into it.” Salvation, therefore, comes through the divine *kabod* and essentially consists in living within the glory of God. Christian glory soteriology definitely preserves all these theological features from the Second Temple mindset, while its distinctive element resides in the identification of Jesus Christ with the *kabod*.

## 6. CONCLUSION

We may conclude by affirming that such documentary evidence shows that the Passover ritual traditions of the Second Temple in Jerusalem included the expectation of the divine salvific glory or *kabod*. Both Jewish and Christian paschal traditions preserved this expectation as a central assumption of their theologies. As illustrated above, I have called this doctrine “glory soteriology,” which sees salvation coming through the theophany of the divine glory. In addition, at least for these aforementioned traditions, the festivals of Pesach and Pascha were the special times of expecting the descent of the divine glory. From a christological viewpoint, Christ is identified with the divine glory (*kabod*) of heaven descended to earth or with the biblical Lord of Glory descended from his celestial throne of light.

As articulated in the preceding section, the roots of glory soteriology appear within the First Temple period as a tradition which ascribes salvific power to the divine *kabod*. The main characteristic of this theological position is that salvation comes through the manifestation of God’s glory and consists of living before the Divine Face. Subsequently, several documents pertaining to the Second Temple period, such as Philo’s writings, associate the vision of light with the Passover festival. Early rabbinic texts related to the festival of Pesach such as *Mishnah Pesachim* and the targums *Neofiti 1* and *Pseudo-Jonathan* preserve this Second Temple tradition. Christian authors, such as Melito and Pseudo-Hippolytus, point to the Christian expectation of the divine light at the time of the paschal festival.

From a mystico-experiential perspective, the three forms of the paschal festival—Second Temple, Christian, and rabbinic traditions—reflect the expectation of seeing God and being saved, which is a central tenet of Jewish and Christian mysticism. Such mysticism represents a key dimension of the Paschal festival, if not the most important. Furthermore, one must observe that such Paschal mysticism implies a distinct feature: it is one performed by a group or community, not by an isolated individual. Some group-oriented ritual acts—such as the repentance pertaining to the Day of Atonement or the Jewish and Christian fasting periods, the Paschal vigil, and the whole



paschal ritual of gestures, hymns, and homilies—appear to have played a role similar to ascetic exercises. These ritual acts, in other words, were intended to prepare the individual for the divine vision of the *kabod*. Additionally, as a form of group mysticism, paschal celebrations are not unique: the Qumran community's liturgical celebration of the Sabbath Sacrifice and the Christian liturgy can also be regarded as forms of community-oriented mysticism.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> See, for instance, Lawrence H. Schiffman, "The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Early History of Jewish Liturgy," in *The Synagogue in Late Antiquity*, ed. Lee A. Levine (Philadelphia: American Schools of Oriental Research and the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1984), 33–48; Carol Newsom, *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice: A Critical Edition* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1985); Margaret Barker, *The Gate of Heaven: The History and Symbolism of the Temple in Jerusalem* (London: SPCK, 1991); S. Reif, *Judaism and Hebrew Prayer: New Perspectives on Jewish Liturgical History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Daniel K. Falk, *Daily, Sabbath, and Festival Prayers in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Leiden: Brill, 1998); Alexander Golitzin, "Liturgy and Mysticism: The Experience of God in Eastern Orthodox Christianity," *ProEccl* 8, no. 1 (1999): 159–186; see also A. Golitzin's idea that the angelic hierarchy is a mirror and shaper of the soul in "Dionysius Areopagites in the Works of Saint Gregory Palamas: On the Question of a 'Christological Corrective' and Related Matters," *SVTQ* 46, no. 2/3 (2002): 163–190; Daniel K. Falk, Florentino García-Martínez, and Eileen M. Schuller, eds., *Sapiential, Liturgical, and Poetical Texts from Qumran: Proceedings of the Third Meeting of the International Organization for Qumran Studies, Oslo 1998: Published in Memory of Maurice Baillet* (Leiden: Brill, 2000); Margaret Barker, *The Revelation of Jesus Christ: Which God Gave to Him to Show to His Servants what Must Soon Take Place [Revelation I.I]* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000), esp. "Excursus: Parousia and Liturgy," 373–388; Fletcher-Louis, *Glory of Adam*; Gottfried Schimanowski, *Die himmlische Liturgie in der Apokalypse des Johannes: Die frühjüdischen Traditionen in Offenbarung 4–5 unter Einschluss der Hekhalotliteratur* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002); Margaret Barker, *The Great High Priest: The Temple Roots of Christian Liturgy* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2003); James R. Davila, ed., *The Dead Sea Scrolls as Background to Postbiblical Judaism and Early Christianity: Papers from an International Conference at St. Andrews in 2001* (Leiden: Brill, 2003); Rachel Elior, *The Three Temples: On the Emergence of Jewish Mysticism* (Oxford: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization: 2004).

## CHAPTER FOUR

### JESUS AS HIGH PRIEST AND LORD OF HOSTS (*YAHWEH SABAOTH*): LITURGICAL SOTERIOLOGY

It is an obvious matter that the Pascha is first and foremost a liturgical moment. The liturgy in itself—as a ritual performed in the sacred abode of divinity and in front of God—represents an ancient vision which the Christian rite inherits from the First Temple era. As a distinctive mark, paschal theology envisions Christ as the High Priest of heaven and the Pascha as a moment where the initiated ones imitate his priestly qualities. Furthermore, liturgical soteriology undoubtedly implies a strong connection with glory soteriology; there is a bond between them, because the salvific glory is usually conceived (as seen above) as manifested in a liturgical context, and the festivals of Pesach and Pascha were especially acknowledging this vision.

This chapter aims to illustrate that the original meaning of the human presence within the sanctuary was to generate a moment in which liturgical gestures develop into a genuine machinery of salvation. Such machinery was supposed to lead to salvation not through its own mechanisms, but rather by attempting to prompt God's gracious condescension and salvific agency. The community considers salvation coming through liturgical acts and desires to be, or conceives itself to be, serving together with the angels. Likewise, another version of this idea is that the community intends to become a priestly genre, sometimes even worthy of serving in front of the divine throne. Each of these versions will be explored below by examining the liturgical soteriology of Melito of Sardis, Pseudo-Hippolytus, and Origen, and lastly, the relevant background of this vision of salvation in materials belonging to the First and Second Temples eras as well as rabbinic time.

#### 1. MELITO OF SARDIS

This form of a liturgical soteriology fashioned through the lens of a christological perspective can be detected in the pre-Nicene paschal documents. The earliest one of these texts, Melito's *Peri Pascha*, presents the author as a mystagogue initiating his audience in the profound mystery of the

Logos-Christ. In the homiletic discourse of the Paschal night, the bishop of Sardis attempts to lead his congregation to discover the mysterious manifestation of the Logos from the ancient history of Israel to his new economy of passion and resurrection. Melito portrays the Logos-Christ as a sacrificial victim. This follows the already manifested notion of the Logos manifested in history in all those who have suffered; namely, Abel, Isaac, Joseph, Moses, David, and the prophets.<sup>1</sup>

The mystery of the sacrificial manifestation of the Logos in history is accomplished through his coming to earth. At this moment, the Logos dresses in the garments of “the suffering one,” an expression denoting humanity, in order to become the appropriate sacrifice able to save in this way the initiated ones and raise them to the heights of heaven.<sup>2</sup> Reflecting on this act, Melito calls upon all the peoples of the world to the mysterious encounter with Christ the Pascha, the sacrificed King from heaven, in order to receive from him and in him remission of sins, salvation, life, resurrection, and light:

Therefore, come, all families of men, you who have been befouled with sins, and receive forgiveness for your sins. I am your forgiveness, I am the Passover of your salvation, I am the lamb which was sacrificed for you, I am your ransom, I am your light, I am your saviour, I am your resurrection, I am your king, I am leading you up to the heights of heaven, I will show you the eternal Father, I will raise you up by my right hand.<sup>3</sup>

It is also supposed that humanity will recover, at the eschaton, the spoiled image of God (*PP* 56). In addition to this, Melito conceives salvation in liturgical terms. For example, in *PP* 67–68, the author depicts Christ as the sacrificial lamb able to save humanity from the servitude to the world, the devil, and death. Thus, he procures salvation by consecrating the initiates with his sacrificial elements: his spirit and his blood.<sup>4</sup> This consecration is confirmed in subsequent verses, with an understanding that Christians become “a new priesthood (ἱεράτευμα καινὸν) and a special people forever.”<sup>5</sup>

And yet, attending paschal liturgy involves more than simply prayer and commemoration. It also engages the participant in a process of discovering the Logos-Christ in his manifestation and eventually in his real nature as

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<sup>1</sup> *PP* 59.

<sup>2</sup> *PP* 47; 100; 102; 103; 104.

<sup>3</sup> *PP* 103.

<sup>4</sup> *PP* 67: “sealed our souls by his own spirit and the members of our bodies by his own blood.”

<sup>5</sup> *PP* 68.

sitting at the right hand of the Father (*PP* 104 and 105), where the transformed humanity is supposed to have a priestly existence. The last six stanzas (100–105) compose a triumphal hymn of Christ as the savior from death and the one who leads his people to the heights of heaven, a detail the text mentions four times. The whole hymn concludes in a very mystical key, namely with the promise of being not only saved in heaven but also standing in front of God and contemplating the Son at the right hand of the Father; affirmed three times in the last three stanzas alone. A similar perspective to Melito may be found in Pseudo-Hippolytus's treatment of the Logos, to which we now turn.

## 2. PSEUDO-HIPPOLYTUS

*In sanctum Pascha* begins with the description of the manifestation of the Logos as a heavenly light present in the whole universe. It then depicts the Jewish Passover as a messenger of the Pascha, where the bread and wine of the Eucharist actually envelop the glorious constitution of the Lord of Glory. It concludes with a cosmic liturgy where the angelic and human realms worship the victorious King of the Powers. *IP* 3.1–15 depicts the whole creation glorifying the King of Glory:

Exault, ye heavens of heavens, which as the Spirit exclaims, *proclaim the glory of God* (Ps 18:1) in that they are first to receive the paternal light of the Divine Spirit. Exault, angels and archangels of the heavens, and all you people, and the whole heavenly host as you look upon your heavenly King come down in bodily form to earth. Exault, you choir of stars pointing out him who rises *before the morning star*. Exault, air, which extends over the abysses and interminable spaces. Exault, bring water of the sea, honored by the sacred traces of his footsteps. Exault, earth washed by the divine blood. Exault, every soul of man, reanimated by the resurrection to a new birth.<sup>6</sup>

The repetitive expression “exault, celebrate” (ἐορταζέτωσαν) reflects the cadence of a hymn very similar to those present in Psalms 29, 103, and 148. In short, they are odes in which the community joins the cosmic praise of God and, more so, the community commands the universe to eulogize the Creator.<sup>7</sup>

It is in this cosmic liturgy that the author intends to insert the earthly paschal liturgy as a mystical path to the King of Glory. While commenting on

<sup>6</sup> *IP* 3. Cf. *IP* 62.

<sup>7</sup> Visonà, *Pseudo Ippolito*, 149–157.

Exodus 12:8,<sup>8</sup> for example, Pseudo-Hippolytus makes the following cryptic affirmation, “This is the night on which the flesh is eaten, for the light of the world has set on the great body of Christ: *Take and eat; this is my body.*”<sup>9</sup> Since the liturgical or Eucharistic context is obvious, the interpretation must follow a liturgical perspective. I submit that Pseudo-Hippolytus refers to the Christian Eucharist, which is taken or received without the vision of Christ’s glory; it is, in other words, taken “in the night.” This night does not refer to the incapacity of seeing the visible light, but to the incapacity of perceiving the invisible, mystical, or pneumatic glory.

However, there are passages in which Pseudo-Hippolytus clearly defines Jesus Christ as an archpriest. For example, in his or her reflection of Heb 8:1, “we have such a high priest (ἀρχιερεύς), who has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens,” the author portrays Christ as a divine high priest. He actually employs such apocalyptic liturgical titles as the “eternal high priest” (ἀρχιερεὺς αἰώνιος; *IP* 46.33; 36) or “the true high priest of the heavens” (*IP* 55.16–17,) as well as several celestial titles which the Bible ascribes to Yahweh Sabaoth. These titles include, the “King of the Powers” (*IP* 46.36), the “King of Glory” (*IP* 46.29–31; 61:9–14), the “eternal King” (*IP* 46.3; 19), the “great King” (*IP* 9.28), and the “Lord of the Powers” (*IP* 46.26; 30; 36).<sup>10</sup>

In what regards the visionary and his or her access to the glory of God, one of the noticeable elements of *In sanctum Pascha* consists in the “democratization” of the accessibility to the hidden realm of heaven. Every human person can be initiated and become a visionary of the highest mystery of the universe; namely, the luminous theophany of the Lord of the Powers. Angels, human beings, stars, waters, and the entire world are all present, contemplating the King of Glory in his various manifestations. This may be

<sup>8</sup> Exodus 12:8 reads, “They shall eat the flesh that same night, roasted with fire.”

<sup>9</sup> *IP* 26.1: Ἐν νυκτὶ δὲ τὰ κρέα ἐσθίεται.

<sup>10</sup> The divine priest represents a central apocalyptic theme as the following articles can prove: Philip G. Davis, “Divine Agents, Mediators, and New Testament Christology,” *JTS* 45 (1994): 479–503; James R. Davila, “Melchizedek, Michael, and War in Heaven,” in *SBLSP* (1996): 259–272; Crispin H.T. Fletcher-Louis, “The High Priest as Divine Mediator in the Hebrew Bible: Dan 7:13 as a Test Case,” *SBLSP* (1997): 161–193; James R. Davila, “Melchizedek: King, Priest, and God,” in *The Seductiveness of Jewish Myth: Challenge or Response?* ed. S. Daniel Breslauer (Albany, NY: SUNY, 1997), 217–234; Margaret Barker, “Beyond the Veil of the Temple: The High Priestly Origin of the Apocalypses,” *SJT* 51, no. 1 (1998): 1–21; Elior, *The Three Temples*; Crispin H.T. Fletcher-Louis, “God’s Image, His Cosmic Temple and the High Priest,” in *Heaven on Earth: The Temple in Biblical Theology*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander and Simon Gathercole (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster Press, 2004), 78–99.

effectively seen in one of the central scenes of *IP* (55.5–25) where they are terrified spectators at the divine passion of the King of the universe:

Then the world was in amazement at his long endurance. The heavens were shocked, the powers were moved, the heavenly thrones and laws were moved at seeing the General of the great powers hanging on the cross; for a short time the stars of heaven were falling when they viewed stretched on the cross him who was before the morning star. For a time the sun's fire was extinguished, the great Light of the world suffered eclipse. Then the earth's rocks were rent ... the veil of the temple was rent in sympathy, bearing witness to the High priest of the heavens, and the world would have been dissolved in confusion and fear at the passion if the great Jesus had not expired saying: Father, into your hands I commit my spirit (Luke 23:46). The whole universe trembled and quaked with fear, and everything was in a state of agitation, but when the Divine Spirit rose again the universe returned to life and regained its vitality.

Subsequently, the last three chapters of the booklet set the scene for a cosmic choir, a mystic choral chanting (χορηγία ἢ μυστική), a spiritual feast, and an antiphonal choir where angels and humans chant and respond to each other. These elements are highlighted in the following passage:

O mystical choir (ὦ τῆς χορηγίας τῆς μυστικῆς)! O feast of the Spirit (ὦ τῆς πνευματικῆς ἑορτῆς)! O Pasch of God, who hast come down from heaven to earth, and from earth ascended again to the heavens. O feast common to all (τῶν ὅλων ἐότασμα), O universal joy, and honor of the universe, its nurture and its luxury, by whom the darkness of death has been dissolved and life extended to all, by whom the gates of heaven have been opened (ἀνεώχθησαν) as God has become man and man has become God. ... An antiphonal choir has been formed on earth to respond to the choir above. O Pasch of God, no longer confined to the heavens and now united to us in spirit; through him the great marriage chamber has been filled. ... O Pasch, illumination (φώτισμα) of the new bright day [literally, "torch procession:" λαμπαδουχία]—the brightness (ἀγλαΐσμα) of the torches of the virgins, through which the lamps of the soul are no longer extinguished, but the divine fire of charity [literally, "the fire of grace:" τῆς χάριτος ... τὸ πῦρ] burns divinely and spiritually in all ....<sup>11</sup>

There are also images associated with liturgical and transformational experience. One of these experiences is expressed through the metaphors of the soul entering the marriage chamber and receiving the wedding garments. In

<sup>11</sup> *IP* 62. Trans. Halton, 68. A similar depiction of the paschal night as universal liturgy of heaven and earth can be encountered in John Chrysostom, *De resurrectione Christi et contra ebriosos* 3 (PG 50:433) and Chromatius of Aquileia, in his first sermon on the Great Night, *Ser.* 16.2–3 (SC 154:262–264): *Unde hanc vigiliam Domini et angeli in caelo et homines in terra et animae fidelium in inferno celebrant.*

this regard, Pseudo-Hippolytus informs us, several times in fact, that Adam will be raised to heaven and dressed with the reconstructed icon of Christ. The resurrected soul is then compared with a lamp, while “the divine fire of grace (χάρις) ... burns divinely and spiritually in all, in soul and body, nurtured by the oil of Christ.”<sup>12</sup>

### 3. ORIGEN OF ALEXANDRIA

Turning our attention to Origen, and specifically to his *Peri Pascha*, one notes his elaboration of yet another fascinating logic of the liturgical view of salvation. It is significant to stress, as well, that participation in the paschal liturgy involves more than pious prayer. The soteriological perspective of the text gravitates around the concepts of priesthood and consecration. Christians have to become priests in order to eat the most sacred parts of God, which are symbolized not as God’s hands, feet, or head, but as God’s entrails, the more hidden dimension of the divine. These are the deep meanings of the manifestation of the Logos in his incarnation, passion, resurrection, and many others:

We have to sacrifice the true lamb (πρόβατον) in order to be sanctified/consecrated priests (ιερωθῶμεν) or to come closer to the priestly status and have to cook/roasted and eat his flesh. ... He Himself says that this Pascha is not sensible (αἰσθητόν) but intelligible (νοητόν): *If you do not eat my flesh and drink my blood, you will not have life in yourself* (John 6:53). Should we eat His flesh and drink His blood in a sensible way? But if He speaks in an intelligible way, then Pascha is not sensible, but intelligible.<sup>13</sup>

The reference to Christ’s Eucharistic body and blood is an obvious feature. Origen identifies said portions with those of the sacrificial lamb, and claims that the initiated ones who take part in this liturgy have to reach a priestly condition. Participants in the paschal mystery, however, will become the priests of a sacrifice that is not part of this world but of the invisible one:

Just as the mysteries of the passover which are celebrated in the Old Testament are superseded by the truth of the New Testament, so too will the mysteries of the New Testament, which we must now celebrate in the same way,

<sup>12</sup> *IP* 62.30–32.

<sup>13</sup> *Pasch.* 13. In *Pasch.* 26, Origen explains how the flesh, i.e., the Scripture, does not have to be eaten green, which means literally interpreted, but burned on the fire of the Holy Spirit, and in this way spiritually read.

not be necessary in the resurrection, a time which is signified by the morning in which nothing will be left, and what does remain of it will be burned with fire.<sup>14</sup>

As such, Jesus' sacrifice is the exclusive modality which procures humanity's salvation: "salvation has been brought about by the blood of Christ himself like a lamb without blemish."<sup>15</sup> In the same line of thought, Origen adds: "This is what the true Sheep says, who is truly the Lamb who takes away the sin of the world, who alone dies so that the whole human race might be saved."<sup>16</sup>

Furthermore, and in addition to consecration, Origen employs the concept of adoption in order to express the idea that taking part in the paschal mystery brings the initiate into a sacred community which shares the consumption of Christ, the Lamb. Receiving Christ will therefore involve, Origen argues, adoption among the children of God (John 1:12) and the possibility to sacrifice the lamb and be saved. He writes, "For adoption in Christ has given us the power of so tremendous salvation, we who are born of the blood and the will of man and women, and whom He [Christ] recognizes as His brothers when he says: *I will proclaim thy name to my brethren.*"<sup>17</sup> As such, these two processes of adoption and consecration will help every human being join the family which Jesus translates from this world up to the kingdom of his Father.

Following this argument, it is interesting to notice that Pseudo-Hippolytus and Origen witness a very peculiar early tradition about Christ's ascension, a tradition which describes his glorious entrance into the Kingdom of heaven.<sup>18</sup> In both cases, they interpret Ps 24[23, LXX]:7–10 in a christological manner. And yet, the Septuagint and the Massoretic Text differ at this point. The usual Jewish interpretation regards the scene as the entrance of a messianic king in Jerusalem, when a herald from the entourage shouts: "Lift up your heads, you gates, lift yourselves up, you everlasting doors, that the king of glory (מֶלֶךְ הַכְבוֹד) may come in."<sup>19</sup> For the Christian side, the passage expresses a dialogue between the angels who surround Christ and the heavenly powers who guard the gates of heaven, "Lift up your gates, O princes,

<sup>14</sup> *Pasch.* 32.

<sup>15</sup> *Pasch.* 41.

<sup>16</sup> *Pasch.* 44.

<sup>17</sup> *Pasch.* 41. Reference to Heb 2:13; Ps. 22/21:23.

<sup>18</sup> The same tradition is preserved in Irenaeus, *Epid.* 84.

<sup>19</sup> Ps 24:7 in the Oxford Study Bible edition.



and be lifted up, o everlasting doors, that the King of glory (ὁ βασιλεὺς τῆς δόξης) may come in." When the guardian powers ask, "Who is the King of glory?" they receive the following answer: "The Lord strong and mighty in battle, the Lord of hosts (κύριος τῶν δυνάμεων; Yahweh Sabaoth in Hebrew), this is the King of glory." Christ is, therefore, the mighty Divine Warrior coming back to his palace from the great battle with Death.

In their commentaries, both Pseudo-Hippolytus and Origen state that the victorious Christ returns surrounded by the congregation of his initiated followers. While Pseudo-Hippolytus envisions this return as a reshape of God's image in the human being followed by the human participating in a universal glorification of the King of Glory, Origen describes it as reconciliation and adoption. Given this description, Origen offers in *Peri Pascha* 49 the following interpretation, while quoting directly Heb 2:13–15:

Here am I and the children God has given me. Since, therefore, the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same nature, that through death he might destroy him who has the power of death, that is the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong bondage.

Thus, participating in the paschal liturgy has a larger significance than mere pious worship. The initiand becomes a priest sacrificing and consuming the sacred divine body, and this consumption entails a transformation of the initiand into a very similar nature with that of Jesus. He or she becomes a "priest" and also a "brother" of Jesus (two titles denoting the deep intimacy with God which the initiate enjoys). Furthermore, they are allowed to ascend to heaven and join the select congregation led by Jesus; in other words, to become similar to him, his heavenly priests and brothers.

#### 4. LITURGICAL SOTERIOLOGY AT THE TEMPLE IN JERUSALEM

An inquiry of the relevant background of the Christian liturgical soteriological vision has to begin with the Temple in Jerusalem, most plausibly the framework which generated the concept of a liturgical soteriology with its essential elements. The assembly in the Temple represented the human presence in front of a saving divinity which dwelled in its innermost, secret chamber: the Holy of Holies. Since the Temple was the place where Yahweh resided in his full glory, the main goal of a visit paid to the Temple was actually the salvation in the presence of Yahweh's glory. Thus, the roots of liturgical soteriology should be found in the Temple service where glory soteriology denotes an essential component.

To this effect, scholars such as Hermann Gunkel, Sigmund Mowinkel, and Helmer Ringgren have already investigated the liturgical use of the psalms in the Temple in Jerusalem.<sup>20</sup> In particular, Ringgren observed that both the ideas of co-celebrating with the angels and being saved in the presence of Yahweh are key themes of the Temple ritual practice and particularly the psalms. Ringgren begins his commentary by indicating that the idea that God dwells in the Temple plays a central role in the theology of the psalms, which is essentially a liturgical theology. Thus, the main goal of the Temple service and assembly will be first and foremost to contemplate God's glorious splendor and beauty residing within the Temple:

The religion of the Psalms is cultic religion. The Psalms were not written for private use—at least, not originally—but for the use in the cult of the Yahwistic community, and in most cases for the cult of the pre-exilic community ... “The Lord is in his holy temple” (Ps 11:4); he dwells in the sanctuary (Pss 26:8; 46:4; 74:2; 132:13f.); and he reveals himself in the temple to the congregation that has come together to celebrate the festival:

Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty  
God shines forth.  
Out God comes, he does not keep silence,  
before him in a devouring fire,  
round about him in mighty tempest.—Ps 50:2,3.

Honor and majesty are before him;  
strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.—Ps 96:6.<sup>21</sup>

Ringgren continues by questioning the meaning of this theophany of Yahweh: “Does it refer to a historical event, such as the giving of the law on Mount Sinai? Or does it refer to a ceremony performed in the cult and symbolizing Yahweh's coming forth to deliver his people? Many Old Testament scholars have accepted the latter theory.”<sup>22</sup> It is also in connection with Yahweh's manifestation in the cult of the Temple that Ringgren mentions the following theophanic verse: “So I have looked upon thee in the sanctuary, beholding thy power and glory.”<sup>23</sup> Ringgren continues then with the

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<sup>20</sup> Hermann Gunkel, *The Psalms: A Form-Critical Introduction*, trans. T.M. Horner (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967); Sigmund Mowinkel, *Psalmstudien*, 6 vols. (Kristiania: SNVAO, 1921); idem, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962); and Helmer Ringgren, *The Faith of the Psalms* (London: SCM Press, 1963).

<sup>21</sup> Ringgren, *Faith*, 1. Cf. Pss 18, 68, and 77.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>23</sup> Ps 63:2.

following commentary: “Even if this should not refer to the cultic theophany, it shows clearly what the sanctuary meant to the pious Israelite: there he met God, seeing him in his glory.”<sup>24</sup> Confirming Ringgren’s observation, Ps 26:8 also affirms this idea: “O Lord, I love the habitation of thy house, and the place where thy glory dwells.”

Temple spirituality may be defined, therefore, as a first instance of group mysticism; and there the idea of assembly plays a central role. In fact, the spirituality of the Psalms in genere seems to be a group mysticism connected with the Temple.<sup>25</sup> Additionally, one may examine Ps 30:2, which underlines the holiness of the people gathered in the sanctuary: “Sing praises to the Lord, O you his saints, and give thanks to his holy name.” Gunkel understands Psalms 15 and 24:3–6 to serve as a Torah liturgy which includes an ascent to Yahweh’s mountain, a response to the congregation (probably from a priest describing the ascetic preparation for this encounter), and finally a blessing formula of conclusion.<sup>26</sup>

Furthermore, some of the Temple assemblies, also mentioned in the Psalms, represented special festivals in ancient Israel. For instance, Psalm 42 describes a procession and a Temple celebration: “My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and behold for the living God. ... I went with the throng, and led them in procession to the house of God, with glad shouts and songs of thanksgiving, a multitude keeping festival.” Likewise, Ps 68:24–25 notes the following: “Thy solemn processions are seen, O God, the processions of my God, my King, into the sanctuary—the singers in front, the minstrels last, between them maidens playing timbrels.” Ps 118:27 also reads: “Bind the festal procession with branches, up to the horns of the altar!” And lastly, Ps 36:8–9 connects Temple, festival, and vision of light: “They feast on the abundance of thy house, and thou givest them drink from the river of thy delights. For with thee is the fountain of life; in thy light (אור) do we see light (אור).” Furthermore, Ps 81:14 depicts a special feast in connection with the new moon (most likely the Pesach, always observed on the

<sup>24</sup> Ringgren, *Faith*, 2.

<sup>25</sup> See, for instance, Ps 122:1: “I was glad when they said to me, ‘Let us go to the house of the Lord!’” Ps 35:18: “Then I will thank thee in the great congregation; in the mighty throng I will praise thee.” Ps 22:22,25: “I will tell of thy name to my brethren; in the midst of the congregation I will praise thee: ... From thee comes my praise in the great congregation (בקהל רב); my vows I will pay before those who fear him.” Ps 26:12: “My foot stands on level ground; in the great congregation I will bless the Lord.”

<sup>26</sup> Gunkel, *Psalms*, 313.

day of new moon in Nissan): “Sing aloud to God our strength; shout for joy to the God of Jacob! Raise a song, sound the timbrel, the sweet lyre with the harp. Blow the trumpet at the new moon, at the fool moon, on our feast day.”

It is worth mentioning the idea that salvation occurs in this liturgical context and Yahweh is the source of deliverance par excellence. Among the various expressions regarding salvation in the psalms, some emphasize the personal level, while others reflect a general, universal soteriological expectation.<sup>27</sup> The general expectation of salvation is present, for instance, in Ps 79:9–10: “Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy name; deliver us, and forgive us our sins, for thy name’s sake! Why should the nations say, ‘Where is their God?’” and Ps 40:16: “May those who love thy salvation say continually, ‘Great is the Lord!’”

In addition, it must be noted that salvation comes from God as well in several distinct ways. In this regard, one understands that it can be either a direct help of Yahweh or a direct action against the enemies of Israel.<sup>28</sup> It may be as well the result of the manifestation of Yahweh’s glorious face, as stated in Ps 67:1, “May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face to shine upon us”; and again, Ps 30:7, reiterates this point, “By thy favor, O Lord, thou hadst established for me dignity and strength; though didst hide thy face, I was dismayed” and Ps 27:4, “One thing have I asked of the Lord, that I will seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord (לִחְזוֹת בְּנֶעַם יְהוָה), and to inquire in his temple.” Likewise, salvation is associated with Yahweh’s presence and a liturgical setting in Ps 95:1–3: “O come, let us sing to the Lord; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation! Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise.”

The connection between the Psalms and the Christian paschal writings involves an even deeper level of discourse encased in the Hallel Psalms (i.e., Psalms 113–118), a group of hymns used in several festivals, such as the Tabernacles, Passover, and Weeks. We must add here that the tradition of singing these psalms at the Passover festival most likely constituted an

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<sup>27</sup> For the personal level, see the following examples, Ps 27:9: “Cast me not off, forsake me not, O God of my salvation.” Ps 40:10: “I have not hid thy saving help within my heart, I have spoken of thy faithfulness and thy salvation.” Ps 27:1: “The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?” Ps 62:1–2: “For God alone my soul waits in silence; from him comes my salvation. He only is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be greatly moved.”

<sup>28</sup> E.g., Ps 58:6: “O God, break the teeth in their mouth,” and Ps 111:5: “He provides food for those who fear him.”

essential liturgical element. For instance, Jesus sings them with his disciples for the Passover, and they will be present later on in both the rabbinic Passover Seder and Christian Pascha. Furthermore, according to this group of psalms, Yahweh lives “high in heaven” (Ps 115:3; cf. 113:6), surrounded by his glory (Ps 113:4). From those high places, he takes care and saves humanity down on earth. The idea of praise comes repeatedly as well as the ideas of community or sanctuary, which is sometimes identified with Judah or Israel (Ps 114:2) or with the whole universe (Ps 114).

In particular, two of these psalms—116 and 118—capture the attention of their reader because of a special soteriological perspective which connects a past salvific event with a future eschatological moment. As such, Ps 118:24 states, “This is the day on which God has acted, a day for us to exult and rejoice.” The place of celebration, according to Ps 118:26–27, is obviously the Temple: “Blessed is he who enters in the name of the Lord; we bless you from the house of the Lord. The Lord is God; he has given us light. Link the pilgrims with cords as far as the horns of the altar.” Within the multiple layers of the discourse, the “I” of the narrator, psalmodist, or choir director overlaps with the whole congregation, while the historical exodus from Egypt and the battles in the history of Israel intertwine with a metaphysical and eschatological salvation from death and Shoal.

##### 5. LITURGICAL SOTERIOLOGY IN SECOND TEMPLE AND RABBINIC TEXTS

The liturgical view on salvation developed at the Temple in Jerusalem will have a notable echo in various later Jewish and Christian contexts, from the Qumranite community to the early rabbinic and Christian liturgical settings. Several modern specialists in Dead Sea materials—most notably Ester Chazon, Rachel Elior, Carol Newsom, and Phillip Alexander—show that the central feature of the Qumranite community was participation in the angelic liturgy or the intention of joining human liturgy to the heavenly one.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Esther Chazon, “Human and Angelic Prayer in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls,” in Idem, *Liturgical Perspectives: Prayer and Poetry in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 35–48; *Qumran Cave 4*, Vol. 6, *Poetical and Liturgical Texts, Part 1*, ed. E. Eshel et al., DJD 11 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 173–401; James R. Davila, *Liturgical Works* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000); Phillip Alexander, *Mystical Texts: Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice and Related Manuscripts* (London: T&T Clark, 2006).

Elior, for instance, while commenting on one of the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice, describes in the following way the interconnection between human and angelic beings:

The song is written and chanted in rhythmic language, which profoundly affects the worshipper and is in fact designed to express the invisible in poetic and musical terms and thus transplant him to the supernatural worlds, to inspire in him a mystical ascent to the angelic world. This is achieved through an associative liturgical shift, from the priestly service in the earthly Temple—whose charge included observing the sacred service, tending for the showbread, and performing through their songs of praise and thanks a ritual of knowledge, justice, and righteousness—to the service of the angels and the Countenance—godlike beings, bearers of celestial knowledge, who chant their songs of praise in the heavenly sanctuary and bear names and designations relating directly to the priestly and levitical service.<sup>30</sup>

In the same line of thought, she adds:

These songs apply the very same terminology to celestial and terrestrial priesthood, creating a linguistic reality that recognizes no barrier between esoteric and exoteric, between invisible sanctuaries and the poetic reality of cosmic calendars and Temple rituals:

With those seven times refined and with the holy ones  
 God will sanctify an everlasting sanctuary for Himself,  
 And purity among the creatures.  
 And they shall be priests, the people of His righteousness, His host,  
 And servants, the angels of His glory,  
 Shall praise Him with marvelous prodigies.<sup>31</sup>

In another analysis Esther Chazon separates in three distinct categories the possibility of union (*yihud*) with the angels. According to the first category, humans invite all creatures of God, including angels, to a common and universal praise of God. In the second type of *unio* humans pray exclusively with, and like, the angels. The two choirs, however, remain separate and, since there is no angelic word in this text, humans do not feel ready yet to take the words of these songs on their own lips. The third category is special as it describes humans and angels now forming one congregation without distinction between their choirs, without a veil separating their realms.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Elior, *Three Temples*, 169.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 170; with a quotation from 4Q511, frg. 35, 1–4 (*DJD* 7:237).

<sup>32</sup> Chazon, “Human and Angelic,” 35–48.

Phillip Alexander contends some aspects of the third type arguing that the Sabbath Songs do not associate this perfect union with a community but with a single individual, the teacher (*Maskil*). Alexander shows that the ascent to heaven and participation in the angelic liturgy was limited to the sacerdotal class or just the *Maskil*, therefore not to the entire community. Later, Christian documents and Heikhalot literature will share the idea of human and angelic common liturgy. The democratization of ascension, where every person can enjoy a heavenly tour, was also a rabbinic element:

This democratization of the doctrine is profoundly rabbinic. It is also profoundly anti-priestly, since the authority of the priestly class depended on maintaining exclusively to themselves the privilege of directly approaching God. If now, as the Heikhalot literature implies, any Israelite has in principle the possibility of entering the true celestial sanctuary and joining the priestly angels in the performance of the celestial liturgy, sacerdotal privilege has gone. As we have already suggested, it is highly unlikely that such a view would have been entertained at Qumran. It is probably that there only the priestly *Maskil* was envisaged as actually making the ascent, in the presence of the congregation, which communed with the angels, and participated in their cult, only in a vaguer way. Or, if the congregation *did* ascend, they probably remained *outside* the celestial sanctuary.<sup>33</sup>

Preceding Heikhalot materials, Christian paschal texts most likely represent the earliest documents that manifest the theological feature of a democratic ascent and participation in the angelic liturgy.

## 6. CONCLUSION

To conclude this chapter, Christian paschal devotion inherited a particular liturgical aspect from the Temple in Jerusalem, an aspect present as well in several early Jewish materials. This tradition envisions the liturgical practice not as a mere pious sentimentalism but as an attempt at imitating the angelic liturgy and participating in this heavenly celebration in front of God's glory. Moreover, this tradition conceived of the liturgical effort as a soteriological praxis leading to the celestial prayer in front of God. Continuing this trend, early Christian paschal writings will envision paschal liturgy as an involvement in the mystery of Christ's manifestation in history; then, in the mystery of his passion, death, and resurrection; and, finally, in the priestly mystery of consuming his body and blood. The Christian

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<sup>33</sup> Alexander, *Mystical*, 133.

community's partaking in the mystery of Pascha and the drinking from the cup of salvation will be translated from the earthly realm to the dominion of the heavenly Father, where they will enjoy an angelic existence. Participating in the earthly mysteries, Christians become priests of the celestial mystery, brethren of Christ, children of the Father, and residents of his heavenly kingdom. Thus, as stated in the works of Pseudo-Hippolytus, Jesus' descent made the universe a space in which humans share with the angels the contemplation of the descended divine *kabod*, and co-celebrate with the angels in front of the *kabod*. In addition, Pseudo-Hippolytus informs us that the eschatological Adam is not only partaking in the heavenly liturgy, but also recovering his prelapsarian glorious condition of *imago Dei*. Since the theme requires a special investigation in itself, the following chapter will be entirely dedicated to this topic.





## CHAPTER FIVE

### *EIKONIC* CHRISTOLOGY AND SOTERIOLOGY

#### A. PASCHAL MATERIALS

One of the most fascinating models of paschal soteriology was a paradigm largely spread in early Christian times, which I have called “*eikonic* soteriology.”<sup>1</sup> The two main characters of this salvation narrative are the divine *Eikon* and its earthly *eikon* (image or copy); in other words, Jesus Christ and the human being. On the one hand, the human being is viewed as an *eikon* distorted from its prelapsarian beauty (sometimes even splendor or glory) and enslaved by Death. On the other hand, the Divine Image has the personified power of developing either a campaign of salvation or of re-activating at the eschaton its creative powers able to restore the earthly *eikon* to its primordial beauty. The Divine *Eikon*, therefore, assumes as well the capacities of fighting Death, as a Divine Warrior, and recreating the human being, as a Divine Demiurge. While the Divine Demiurge title will be discussed in this fifth chapter, too, chapter six will analyze, separately, the Divine Warrior Christology and soteriology, which involve some new complexities. I will also argue, in this chapter, that the inventor of said *eikonic* soteriology was Paul. Further, paschal theology preserved this doctrine on salvation either in Pauline or slightly modified form.

Additionally, the Divine Image is sometimes called the Heavenly Anthropos. In my review of this title, one has to understand that this theory synthesizes the two Anthropos developments; namely, the exaltation of the earthly Adam and the hypostatization of the Divine Image. Of further concern is the fact that the paschal Anthropos is the Divine Image and the Demiurge, that agent who created *ab origine* the human being according to his own form, and descended towards the end of time in order to elevate the human shape and the fallen Adam to their primeval condition. I therefore submit that the descent of the Divine Anthropos entails the ascension and exaltation of the fallen protopater. Consequently, paschal theology in its anthropological and

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<sup>1</sup> See Giulea, “Eikonic soteriology.”

soteriological dimensions articulates a synthesis of the two Adamic developments, since the earthly, or fallen, Adam is *exalted* through the divine *descent* of the Heavenly Anthropos. What follows is an examination of the doctrine of *eikonic* soteriology in the works of Melito, Pseudo-Hippolytus, Tertullian, and Methodius of Olympus, all of whom offer their own unique perspective on this theory of salvation.

### 1. MELITO'S "IDIOCY" AND THE SALVATION OF GOD'S EARTHLY *EIKON*

An investigation of Melito's *eikonic* soteriology has to start from his conception regarding the image of God within the human being. Origen of Alexandria is a key witness in this discussion. Origen addresses this topic in his analysis of Gen 1:27, and observes the existence of two interpretative traditions about the image of God in the human being; namely, as imprinted either in the body or in the soul. Since the first possibility appears to the learned Alexandrian as pure idiocy, he commits himself to the second.<sup>2</sup> According to his opinion, the anthropomorphic party defends an utterly impossible interpretation, full of internal contradictions. First, Origen shows that the Bible includes such phrases as the "wings of God." According to the literal reading of the Bible, God, therefore, possesses wings. Moreover, if the human being is the image of God, humans should also be equipped with wings, which is pure absurdity. It is fair to conclude, therefore, that the genuine interpretation has to be allegorical and the place where the copy of the Divine Image dwells should be without any doubt the human soul or the "inner man." In addition, as addressed above, Origen classifies Melito among the literalists and, consequently, among those theologians who considered the human body as the image of God.

Some elements of *eikonic* soteriology occur in Melito's *Peri Pascha*. While offering his perspective on Genesis 1 and 2 in *PP* 47–56, Melito narrates in dark nuances Adam's fall and the disastrous consequences which followed it. He continues by unveiling to his audience the mysterious works and prophetic arrangements of the Logos-Christ in the patriarchs and prophets, as preparations for the great mystery of his incarnation. Likewise, *PP* 47–56 recounts the creation of the human being first according to

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<sup>2</sup> *Sel. Gen.* 25 (PG 12:93A): "How should not be called idiot [μωρός] the one who thinks such things about God?" Cf. Gennadius, *Dog. eccl.* 24.2; cf. C.H. Turner, "The *Liber Ecclesiasticorum Dogmatum* Attributed to Gennadius," *JTS* 7 (1906): 78–99, 90.

Gen 2:7. Although Melito changes the biblical notion of “breath” given from God for the human “soul,” this anthropology will remain emblematic for his vision. In his conception, the human being seems to be the unity of the soul and body, as the following passage confirms:

At these things [i.e., human crimes] sin (ἀμαρτία) rejoiced, who in the capacity of death's fellow worker (τοῦ θανάτου σύνεργος) journeys ahead into the souls (ψυχάς) of men, and prepares as food for him the bodies (σώματα) of the dead. In every soul sin made a mark, and those in whom he made it were bound to die. So all flesh (σάρξ) began to fall under sin, and every body under death, and every soul was driven out of its fleshly dwelling (ἐκ τοῦ σαρκίκου οἴκου ἐξηλαύνετο). And what was taken from earth was to earth dissolved, and what was given from God was confined in Hades (εἰς ἄδην κατεκλείτο); and there was separation (λύσις) of what fitted beautifully (τῆς καλῆς ἀρμοσγῆς), and the beautiful body (τὸ καλὸν σῶμα) was split apart (διεχωρίζετο).<sup>3</sup>

The human body therefore, was created as a beautiful, psychosomatic microcosm encapsulating a soul. Adam's fall will destroy this cohabitation, since the soul will be confined in Hades and the flesh dissolved.<sup>4</sup>

The next passage continues the account of the tragedy of the fall in the horizon of a divided and fragmented being, and it finally inserts the concept of image. In this way, the two passages form together a synthesis of the terrestrial anthropology of Gen 2:7 and the *eikonic* anthropology of Gen 1:26–27:

For man (ἄνθρωπος) was being divided (μεριζόμενος) by death; for a strange disaster and captivity were enclosing (περιείχεν) him, and he was dragged off a prisoner (εἴλκετο αἰχμάλωντος) under the shadows of death, and desolate (ἔρημος) lay the Father's image (ἡ τοῦ πατρὸς εἰκὼν).<sup>5</sup>

The imagery reflected in such terminology as περιέχω (to encompass, embrace, surround), εἴλκετο αἰχμάλωντος (was dragged off a prisoner), and ἔρημος (desolate, lonely, solitary) creates the scenario of a captive or exiled person in a tenebrous realm. This is the post-lapsarian residence of the souls. Related to this, the aforementioned ἐκ τοῦ σαρκίκου οἴκου ἐξηλαύνετο (was driven out of its fleshly dwelling) reflects the same narrative of the human soul having been taken out of its own flesh, or from its own home.

<sup>3</sup> PP 54–55.379–390.

<sup>4</sup> Hall also confirms this doctrine: “If it is true that Melito believed God to be corporeal, the reference is to man as a psychosomatic unity, and the image would not be merely the soul or reason” (Hall, *Melito*, 31, n. 20). While three particular manuscripts (BCG) preserve the expression τοῦ πατρὸς εἰκὼν (Father's icon), papyrus Chester Beatty has Spirit (IINΣ).

<sup>5</sup> PP 56.392–395.

Contrary to what Origen affirms about the theological vision of the Sardis-ean, Melito seems to identify, at least within this text, the image of God with the human soul imprisoned in Hades, i.e., in the kingdom of death. The image of God does not appear, therefore, to be lost from the unfortunate human being, but rather imprisoned, mutilated, and its flesh amputated. And yet, it is the soul that resides in Hades, and it is the soul that actually constitutes the only remains of the human being: “what was given from God was confined in Hades.”<sup>6</sup>

This fallen condition of the human being represents, in fact, the reason which triggers the whole process of the divine economy. As in the case of ancient Israel, humanity exists within the imprisonment of Hades. Christ, who saved Israel from Egypt as a pre-figuration of his future act, saves humanity from Hades, and subsequently takes it back to heaven. Nevertheless, in order to reach the tenebrous realm of Hades, Christ too must assume the human condition and, therefore, death. In doing so, he treads down Hades, binds the strong one,<sup>7</sup> and “by the Spirit which could not die he killed death the killer of men.”<sup>8</sup>

One can therefore conclude that significant elements of *eikonic* soteriology are already developed in *Peri Pascha*. First, it is the destitute condition of the image of God that represents the real cause of the divine economy.<sup>9</sup> As we will see later, it is very plausible that Melito’s *eikonic* soteriology may have been partially inspired by Paul, most likely the inventor of image soteriology. However, Melito conceives of salvation not as an eschatological re-creation—as Paul does—but as a salvation from Hades. Melito does not speak of a distorted primordial image to be remolded in the eschaton, but of an imprisoned icon in need of urgent liberation. Although Christ is plainly identified with the Demiurge of the world in *Peri Pascha*, His salvific function is first of all that of a Savior or Liberator. Consequently, and lastly, Melito’s *eikonic* soteriology is not reconstructionist but liberationist.

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<sup>6</sup> *PP* 55.389.

<sup>7</sup> *PP* 102.

<sup>8</sup> *PP* 66.457–478.

<sup>9</sup> Melito clearly affirms it in the following verse: “... desolate lay the Father’s image. This, then, is the reason (τῆν αἰτίαν) why the mystery of the Pascha has been fulfilled in the body of the Lord” (*PP* 56.396–397).

## 2. PSEUDO-HIPPOLYTUS

*A. Christ, the Heavenly Eikon Which Saves His Earthly Eikon*

A similar scenario, regarding the enslaved and liberated image of God, recurs throughout the work of Pseudo-Hippolytus. One may turn to *In sanctum Pascha* 45, which describes the enslaved condition of the human being and how the Logos assumes the nature of the first man, the prelapsarian Adam:

From heaven he saw us tyrannized by death (ὑπὸ θανάτου τυραννουμένους), bound (δεσμουμένους) and loosed at the same time in the chains of death (δεσμοῖς φθοράς), traversing the fatal road which has no point of return. He came and assumed (λαβών) the first man's nature (τοῦ πρώτου πλάσματος) according to the design of his Father, and he did not entrust to his angels and archangels the charge of our souls, but he himself, the Word (ὁ λόγος), undertook the entire challenge (τὸν ἀγῶνα) for us in obedience to his Father's orders. ... He filled it with radiance and fire, making it virginal and, so to speak, angelic. Such is the body that he models in the image of man (εἰς τὴν ἀνθρωπίνην εἰκόνα σωματικῶς ἔμορφοῦτο), and keeping his spiritual beauty (πνευματικὴν ἀνατολήν) he has taken flesh (σωματικὴν μόρφωσιν).<sup>10</sup>

Thus, Pseudo-Hippolytus's universe is again dual: spiritual and material. While Christ spiritually remains the pneumatic Orient, he somatically fashions a body in the image of man. Additionally, in chapter 61, Pseudo-Hippolytus relates the salvation of the image narrating how the Son took the shape of the image in order to save it from the slavery to death, and to take it to the heights of heaven:

In his [Christ's] brief sojourn he gave proofs in confirmation of his sacred resurrection even to the incredulous so that they might believe that he rose body as well as soul from the dead. And while carrying in himself the complete image (ὄλην τὴν εἰκόνα ἐν ἑαυτῷ φέρων ἐνεδύσατο), he put on the old man (τὸν παλαιὸν ἄνθρωπον ἀναστολισάμενος) and transformed it into the heavenly man (μετέθηκεν εἰς τὸν ἐπουράνιον ἄνθρωπον), and then ascended into the heavens, carrying with him man's image assimilated to himself (συνανέβαινεν αὐτῷ καὶ ἡ εἰκὼν συγκεκραμένη εἰς τοὺς οὐρανοὺς). In view of such a great mystery—man ascending (συναναβαίνοντα ἤδη ἄνθρωπον ἐν θεῷ) to God—the Powers cried with joy to the hosts above: *Princes, raise your gates*.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> *IP* 45. Hamman's translation bares certain post-Nicene nuances, as the noun "nature" is not in the Greek text, and also the verb λαμβάνω, to "assume," is actually the less pretentious to "take." Hamman follows in this way the first editor, Nautin, who presupposed a τὴν φύσιν; Cantalamessa proposed τὸ σῶμα, Orbe τὴν οὐσίαν, while Visonà left the text as such with a lacuna (see the discussion in Visonà, 286).

<sup>11</sup> *IP* 60–61.

Yet, Hamman's translation required a small but essential revision according to Visonà's new critical edition; namely, the participial form ἀναστολισάμενος ("having put on," from ἀναστολίζω) instead of ἀναστολησάμενος ("having put off," from ἀναστόλημαι). As Visonà observed, such a change modifies the soteriology of the text;<sup>12</sup> Christ therefore does not put off but, instead, puts on the old man. In his commentary on the passage, Visonà notes that it does not reflect an Apollinarian perspective, as Pierre Nautin proposed, but a doctrine finding its roots and terminologies in 1 Cor 15:47–49, Eph 4:22–23, and Col 3:9–10.<sup>13</sup> I contend in my review of these texts that these are the central passages of the Pauline *eikonic* soteriology. In this way, according to Visonà, Pseudo-Hippolytus delineates the process of salvation in two successive exploits of the divine Logos: first, Christ, as the perfect Image in itself, puts on the "old man" (therefore assuming human condition by his incarnation) and transforms it into a heavenly man. Second, Christ ascends in triumph to heaven accompanied by the new man.<sup>14</sup>

This notion of image is central for the entirety of the aforementioned argument. Within the first sentence, Christ, who has clothed and wears in himself the perfect image (δὴν τὴν εἰκόνα ἐν ἑαυτῷ φέρων ἐνεδύσατο), echoes the figure of Yahweh from Psalm 93 [LXX 92]:1 clothed in majesty and power: Ὁ κύριος (117) ἐβασίλευσεν, εὐπρέπειαν ἐνεδύσατο, ἐνεδύσατο κύριος δύναμιν καὶ περιεζώσατο. The ancient *kabod*, sometimes identified with Yahweh's *tselem*, is now considered by Pseudo-Hippolytus to be the Divine Image covering Christ as a garment. The salvific process actually starts at the point where the old man is assumed into Christ's perfect Image; and this is the event of the incarnation which Pseudo-Hippolytus describes as "dressing" the παλαιὸς ἄνθρωπος. The direct proximity between the old man and the perfect Image of Christ transforms the old man into a heavenly one, most likely into a copy of the perfect Image of Christ.<sup>15</sup>

Furthermore, Paul's notion of παλαιὸς ἄνθρωπος does not include any positive connotation. Instead, it designates the fallen condition of humanity deluded by its desires and in the course of decay. On the contrary,

<sup>12</sup> See Visonà's commentary, *Pseudo Ippolito*, 315 and 507–709.

<sup>13</sup> For Nautin, see SC 27:47. Visonà especially underlines that, while the discussion on the Heavenly Man in Apollinarius focusses on the event of the incarnation, it gravitates in Pseudo-Hippolytus around the ideas of salvation and transformation of the old man into a heavenly man.

<sup>14</sup> Visonà, *Pseudo Ippolito*, 507.

<sup>15</sup> *IP* 61.

Pseudo-Hippolytus, according to Visonà's reformulation, seems to envision the *παλαιὸς ἄνθρωπος* as the prelapsarian Adamic condition, since it is difficult to imagine Pseudo-Hippolytus thinking of a Christ confounded by desires and subject to moral decay. Visonà himself affirms that Christ clothes himself with the ancient Adam and, through his passion, transforms the forefather of humanity into a heavenly man.<sup>16</sup>

The second stage of salvation—namely, the ascension—also involves the notion of image, since Christ takes up to heaven the human image which he assumed. In this way, the ascension converts into the moment when the human image is taken up to heaven. The salvation story, accordingly, becomes essentially *eikonic*. In addition, Pseudo-Hippolytus's *eikonic* soteriology shares an essential feature with Melito's, since it may be classified in the same category of the "*eikonic* soteriology of liberation," rather than that of the Pauline "*eikonic* soteriology of re-creation."

### B. *The Mystic Who Becomes Christ, the Cosmic Anthropos*

In the very peculiar passage of *IP* 51 which discusses the cosmic tree-cross-Christ presented in the first chapter, the reader encounters a sort of a mystical experience. The author communicates, in this report, his identification with this cross-tree-Christ, while being transformed into the roots, branches, and flowers of the cosmic arbor.

In a first instance, the cross-tree nourishes and delights the mystic. The mystic then extends his/her presence into the roots and branches of the tree acquiring cosmic dimensions identical to those of the tree. At this point the visionary adds new forms of spiritual nourishment: s/he is delighted in the "dew" (*δρόσος*) of the tree, an ancient biblical term usually deployed to indicate the presence of God.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, the expression immediately following this mentions the Spirit (*πνεῦμα*) of this tree and the fact that the visionary perceives this Spirit as "a delightful breeze." S/he also recounts the "shade" (*σκιᾶ*) of the tree, another biblical image connected with the Spirit, and again the dew.<sup>18</sup> The extension of the mystic is further reported

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> See for example Exod 16:13–14; Num 11:9; Judg 6:36–40. The first two instances are interesting, since the dew comes from heaven with the manna, and Ps-Hippolytus conceives of Christ as the "manna come down from heaven (*τὸ μάννα τὸ ἐκ τῶν οὐρανῶν*)" (*IP* 25).

<sup>18</sup> For the connection between the shade and the divine presence of God, see especially LXX: Exod 25:20; 38:8; 40:35; Deut 33:12; 1 Chr 28:18; and Luke 1:35 for the direct connection between the Spirit and overshadowing.



in the next sentences which narrate the mystic's identification with the flowers, the fruits, and the leaves of the tree. Among them, leaves are directly referring to the Spirit, since—at least for the author—they epitomize the “breath of life (πνεῦμα ζωῆς).”

The mystic therefore identifies his or herself with the tree being extended through its roots, branches, flowers, fruits, and leaves which become his breath of life. Consequently, the mystic becomes one with Christ (the cosmic tree-Anthropos) and is nourished with the dew and the breath of life s/he finds everywhere on this tree. In this text, the Spirit functions as a mediator and source of life for the mystic who eventually becomes one with the Divine Anthropos, a perfect image of the divine *Eikon*. Even better, beyond its relative ambiguity, the text expresses the mystic's becoming Christomorphic. Thus, the whole report reflects to its fullness the author's *eikonic* soteriology: the descent of the divine *Eikon* made possible this transformation of the mystic into a copy of the Image.

### 3. TERTULLIAN

Similar to Melito and Pseudo-Hippolytus, Tertullian is another early author who elaborates an *eikonic* soteriology in his tractate *De resurrectione carnis*. Within this treatise, Tertullian conceives of the human being as the image of God and understands the term “image” as referring to Christ's form of God:

For the Father had already spoken to the Son in these words, *Let us make man unto our own image and likeness. And God made man* (the same thing of course as ‘formed’): *unto the image of God [ad imaginem dei]* (‘of Christ’, it means) *made him*. For the Word also is God, who being in the form of God (*effigie dei*)  
...<sup>19</sup>

On the contrary, postlapsarian humanity bears Adam's earthly image. This distinction clearly shows that Tertullian conceives of salvation in Pauline terms, as a transformation from the image of the earthly man, Adam, to the glorious image of the Heavenly Man, who is Jesus Christ:

[I]t follows that those who after his fashion are heavenly must be understood to have been declared heavenly not on the ground of their present substance but on the ground of their future splendor (*claritate*): because at the previous point from which that distinction derived it was shown that it is by difference

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<sup>19</sup> Res. 6. For the critical edition and English translation, see Ernest Evans, *Tertullian's Treatise On the Resurrection* (London: SPCK, 1960), 19. For Paul, see, e.g., 1 Cor 15:47.

of dignity that there is one glory of the more than heavenly (*supercaelestium gloria*) and another of the more than earthly, and one glory of the sun, another of the moon, and another of the stars, seeing that star also differs from star in glory (*in gloria*), yet not in substance (*in substantia*). Consequently, having premised that there is in the same substance a difference of the dignity which must now be sought after and hereafter will be attained, he adds also an exhortation for us even here to seek after Christ's attire (*habitum*) by discipline, and there to attain to his altitude by glory (*gloria*): *As we have worn the image of the choic man (imagine[m] choici), let us also wear the image of him who is more than heavenly (imagine[m] supercaelestis).*<sup>20</sup>

The passage continues by defining the image of the earthly man as postlapsarian life in transgression, death, and exile from Eden. This is the image of the earthly Adam, which requires change with the image of the heavenly man even in the course of this life:

For we have worn the image of the choic man by partnership in transgression, by fellowship in death, by exile from paradise. For though it is in the flesh that here the image of Adam (*portatur imago Adae*) is worn, yet it is not the flesh we are enjoined to take off: and if not the flesh, then it is the life and manners, so that we may thereby also wear in us the image of the heavenly (*caelestis imagine[m] gestemus in nobis*), though we are not yet gods, not yet established in heaven, but according to the lineaments (*lineamenta*) of Christ are proceeding in holiness and righteousness and truth. And to such a degree does he turn all this in the direction of discipline, that he says the image (*imagine[m]*) of Christ must be worn here, in this flesh, and in this time of discipline.<sup>21</sup>

Lastly, I would like to emphasize in this section the nature of Tertullian's *eikonic* soteriology. His version follows Paul by conceiving of salvation as completed through the reconstruction of the human body or human flesh:

For if out of nothing God has built up all things, he will be able also out of nothing to produce the flesh reduced to nothing: or if out of material he has contrived things other than it, he will be able also out of something other than it to recall the flesh, into whatsoever it may have been drained away. And certainly he who has made it competent to remake, seeing it is a greater thing to make (*fecisse*) than to remake (*refecisse*), to give a beginning than to give back again. Thus may you believe that the restitution (*restitutionem*) of the flesh is easier than its institution (*institutione*).<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> *Res.* 49.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> *Res.* 11.

Tertullian, therefore, articulates an “*eikonic* soteriology of re-creation.” Similarly, such an understanding will be explored in Methodius’s tractate on resurrection. As such, I turn to Methodius in order to further explore this soteriological vision in paschal contexts.

#### 4. METHIDIUS OF OLYMPUS

While *eikonic* soteriology is not part of Origen’s paschal speculations, I would like to include here another pre-Nicene thinker, who, like Tertullian, developed a vision analogous to the Pauline “*eikonic* soteriology of re-creation.”

In his treatise on resurrection, Methodius describes the essence of the human being as an accurate imitation of God’s Only-begotten Image. Thus, God offered to the human being,

with the highest accuracy, everything belonging to the theomorphic and god-like Prototype (τὸ θεοειδὲς καὶ θεοεἶκλον ... πρωτότυπον) and the only-begotten Image (μονογενῆ εἰκόνα) of the Father. In fact, it is said: *God created man, in God’s image* (κατ’ εἰκόνα θεοῦ) *created him*.<sup>23</sup>

Methodius’s viewpoint on Adam’s prelapsarian status is clearly stated in *Res.* 3.14.4 where he affirms that, “before transgression, our body was a body of glory (σῶμα δόξης), being glorious (ἔνδοξον) at that time, while now, after transgression, is called a body of humiliation (σῶμα ταπεινώσεως).”<sup>24</sup> The text continues by explaining that the body of resurrection will be again a glorious corporeality; it will be “not a different body, but this one will resurrect and become incorruptible and glorious (σῶμα ἄφθαρτον καὶ ἔνδοξον).”<sup>25</sup>

Throughout his text, Methodius articulates the way God will reshape the human resurrected body. This explanation includes a visionary comparison in which God is depicted as an artist who created a beautiful statue and subsequently found it corrupted. Methodius ponders that such an artist would strongly desire to repair his artwork, to melt it down, and reshape it according to its primary condition. The Olympian continues:

It seems to me that God did in the same way with us. Because finding his most beautiful work—the human being—spoiled by malicious plots of envy and

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<sup>23</sup> Methodius, *Res.* 1.35.2. For the Greek text, see Nathanael Bonwetsch, ed., *Methodius von Olympus*, GCS 27 (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1917). If otherwise noted, all translations from Methodius are mine. Cf. *Res.* 2.24.3–4.

<sup>24</sup> *Res.* 3.14.4.

<sup>25</sup> *Res.* 3.14.5.

loving humankind, he could not tolerate to abandon him in this condition, lest not remain forever with an immortal guilt in himself. To the contrary, [God] dissolved him into its primary matter so that, by refashioning (διὰ τῆς ἀναπλάσεως) him, all his blames could be consumed and disappear. In fact, the melting down of the statue symbolizes the death and dissolution of the body, while the re-formation (ἀναμορφοποιηθῆναι τὴν ὕλην) and the new configuration (ἀνακοσμηθῆναι) of matter signifies the resurrection.<sup>26</sup>

Likewise, another remarkable Methodian theory distinguishes between the eschatological status of angels and human beings, apparently in spite of Matt 22:30.<sup>27</sup> Methodius argues extensively in *Res.* 1.49–51 that God created the various creatures that populate the universe according to their specific category and nature. God is not a mediocre artisan who regretted his creation of humans as humans (i.e., with their unique and imperfect nature), and then changed his mind desiring a better work and humans changed into angels. God, Methodius insists, designed humans to be humans from the beginning to the end in the authenticity of their species. In this regard, Methodius comments on Matt 22:30 and asserts that the small particle “like” actually shows *difference* rather than *identity*: humans will not replace angels or possess the same ‘nature,’ but preserve their own nature and improve their status to the point of acquiring a glorious body. Thus, the phrase “like angels” actually refers to incorruptibility and the crown of glory and honour which humans will enjoy in the eschaton.<sup>28</sup>

## 5. CONCLUSION

One may conclude this investigation by asserting that early paschal *eikonic* soteriology knew two distinct forms. First, Melito and Pseudo-Hippolytus developed an “*eikonic* soteriology of liberation.” Christ as the Image of God and Savior puts on the humble garment of humankind in order to save His image on earth—the human being—from the tyranny of death. Second, Tertullian and Methodius developed an “*eikonic* soteriology of re-creation.” Christ is the Divine Image and also the Divine Demiurge who creates human beings according to his own glorious Form. Likewise, Christ is the Demiurge

<sup>26</sup> *Res.* 1.43.3–4.

<sup>27</sup> Matt 22:30 reads, “In the resurrection men and women do not marry: they are like angels in heaven.”

<sup>28</sup> *Res.* 1.51.2.

who, at the end of time, will re-activate his demiurgic powers and refashion human decomposed bodies according to his radiant Image. The following section will investigate the fascinating origins and context in which the *eikonic* soteriology emerged. We may anticipate the conclusion and affirm that the origins of this vision on salvation can be found in Paul, who elaborated an *eikonic* soteriology of re-creation.

## B. PAUL AND THE ROOTS OF *EIKONIC* CHRISTOLOGY AND SOTERIOLOGY

The following lines will be a search for the background of *eikonic* soteriology, an archeology into the roots of this vision on salvation, and an argument for the thesis that Paul was the inventor of this soteriological paradigm. In addition, I argue that Paul generated this theory within the conceptual framework of previous biblical and extra-biblical speculations about the eschatological reconstruction of the world and the eschatological reconstruction of the human being in the glorious form of the prelapsarian Adam.

### 1. *EIKONIC* ANTHROPOLOGY: ADAM AS IMAGE OF GOD OR THE ROYAL ADAM OF THE PRIESTLY SOURCE

The saga of *eikonic* soteriology begins within the first chapter of Genesis—arguably the earliest Jewish material portraying Adam as the image of God. A different portrait of Adam is present in Genesis 2 and 3, which delineate the protopater as a composition of dust and spirit. The second story includes the “fall” narrative and shows Yahweh downgrading Adam to dust and expelling him from Paradise. In other words, the divine likeness outlined in the first story is not present in the subsequent chapters. Thus, whether one accepts or discards the theory of two sources—*P* (e.g., Gen 1–2:4a, 5) and *J* (e.g., Gen 2:4b–4:26)—the first two chapters of Genesis disclose two distinct anthropological theorizations: two distinct visions about the constitution of the human being. The first story builds its framework on the key categories of “image” and “likeness” (Gen 1:26–30), while the second focuses on the main categories of “dust of the earth,” “breath of life,” and “living being” (Gen 2:7).

Thus, the first anthropological position conceives of Adam as an image of the divine being; his attributes mirroring God’s attributes and those of the

members of the divine council.<sup>29</sup> It is worth mentioning that several scholars have observed that the language of this anthropology was a common feature of ancient Near Eastern cultures and usually associated with royal imagery. For example, the monarchs of Mesopotamia and Egypt were portrayed as the “image” or “likeness” of a particular divinity.<sup>30</sup> Mesopotamian documents preserve such salutations as, “The father of my lord the king is the very image of Bel (*šalam bel*) and the king, my lord, is the very image of Bel,” “The king, lord of the lands, is the image of Shamash,” and “O king of the inhabited world, you are the image of Marduk.”<sup>31</sup> The Egyptian name Tutankhamun (*Tut-ankh-amun*) was understood to mean the “living image of (the god) Amun,” while the designation of Thutmose IV was the “likeness of Re.”<sup>32</sup> In this context, therefore, Adam is also understood as a royal figure. Scholar Nahum M. Sarna affirms that “without a doubt, the terminology employed in Gen 1:26–27 is derived from regal vocabulary,” which means that Adam is portrayed as a king of creation and the image of God on earth.<sup>33</sup> The idea is further supported by the verb to “rule” (רדה), recurring also in Gen 1:28. The verb is used to designate the royal task Yahweh ascribes to Adam in creation: to rule over the fish, birds, cattle, the whole earth, and all the creeping things.<sup>34</sup>

It is significant to mention at this point, however, that the ideas of human fall, corruption, evil, or any sort of deficiency are not part of this anthropological scenario. This first anthropological perspective ends in Gen 1:31 with a clear, declarative statement: “God saw all that He had made, and it was very good (טוב מאד).” Humanity, as part of creation, was consequently without a trace of evil. In addition, at this stage of the narrative, the Garden of Eden is not mentioned. Thus, the realm or geography of perfection is not

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<sup>29</sup> See, for instance, Nahum M. Sarna, *The JPS Torah Commentary: Genesis* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1989), 12; W. Randall Garr, *In His Own Image and Likeness: Humanity, Divinity, and Monotheism* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 117–178, for a form-critical analysis of the terms דמות and צלם.

<sup>30</sup> Sarna, *Genesis*, 12.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.* For a scholarly history of interpretation of Gen 1:26–27, see, for instance, Claus Westermann, *Genesis 1–11. A Continental Commentary*, trans. J.J. Scullion (Minneapolis, Fortress Press, 1994), 146–160.

<sup>34</sup> See Sarna, *The JPS Torah*, 12–13. Cf. Westermann, *Genesis*, 158–159. See also Bernard F. Batto, “The Divine Sovereign: The Image of God in the Priestly Creation Account,” in *David and Zion: Biblical Studies in Honor of J.J.M. Roberts*, eds. Bernard F. Batto and Kathryn L. Roberts (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2004).

confined to a certain place on earth, since the whole of creation is good and the human being is the unique royal figure of this entire dominion.

A few chapters later, specifically in Gen 5:1, the priestly list of patriarchs is focused again on the idea of Divine Image. Gen 5:1 informs us that Adam was created in the likeness (דמוות) of God (Elohim) and he had a son (Seth) according to his image and likeness. Seth, therefore, serves as a new copy of the Divine Image. To conclude this brief overview, one may observe that the *P* document does not portray Adam in negative nuances, does not mention a fault of Adam, and defines him as the image of God.

## 2. PNOETICO-PSYCHIC ANTHROPOLOGY: THE ADAM OF MUD AND “SPIRIT”<sup>35</sup>

As specified above, the second narrative includes a different anthropology. The *J* source relates how Yahweh created Adam and the Garden of Eden, placed the forefather in the Garden, and expelled him because of his eating from the forbidden tree. Thus, the Yahwist source develops an entirely different narrative scenario along with a new anthropological framework. Adam is considered now to be more related to the dust of the earth than to the heavenly Image of God. In this material, Yahweh formed (יצר) Adam from the dust of the earth (עפר מן־האדמה), breathed (יפח) into his nostrils the breath of life (נשמת חיים) in order to make him a living being (נפש חיה) and placed his creature in the Garden. Unlike the first description of the world, in which everything was “very good”—an expression rather pointing to the ontological perfection of creation—the Garden is a place ruled by senses, a realm where objects are visually, palatably, and intellectually appealing and entrancing. Within this account, Adam is no longer a king but a gardener: a manager who classifies everything and tastes of everything, therefore one who appraises everything in this paradise of senses. But when he transgresses the rule regarding the tree of knowledge, Yahweh sends him back to the dust from which he was made (Gen 3:19):

Gen 2:7 Then the Lord God formed (יצר) man from the dust of the ground (עפר מן־האדמה), and breathed (יפח) into his nostrils the breath of life (נשמת חיים); and the man became a living being (נפש חיה). 8 And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east; and there he put the man whom he had formed. ...

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<sup>35</sup> The term “pnoetic” comes from the Greek πνοή (“breath,” “wind”), translating the Hebrew נשמה from Gen 2:7.

15 The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to till it and keep it. ... 3:17 "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten of the tree about which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it', cursed is the ground (אדמה) because of you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life; 18 thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. 19 By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread until you return to the ground (אדמה), for out of it you were taken; you are dust (עפר), and to dust you shall return."

While the first Adam was bearing the image of God, the second is degraded to a teriomorphic (animal form) condition. Most likely, within the second anthropology, the garments of skin, mentioned in Gen 3:21, point to the teriomorphic constitution of the human being. In so doing, the metaphor suggests devaluation and deficiency.<sup>36</sup>

### 3. ESCHATOLOGICAL "NEW CREATION" IN SECOND TEMPLE AND POST-TEMPLE MATERIALS

Of the two anthropological perspectives, it is particularly the first type, the *eikonic* one, which will later develop into the Second Temple, early Christian, and rabbinic conceptions about the glorious Adam, the luminous image of God. In addition, this glorious figure will be projected or translated from the *illo tempore* of origins to the eschaton, and there envisioned as a new creation.

I intend to investigate in the following sub-chapters this particular development and trace this Second Temple trend. The idea of 'new creation' seems to go back to the post-exilic times and have a strong connection with the reconstruction of the Temple, as Pilchan Lee shows in his monograph

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<sup>36</sup> See, for example, for the idea that human transformation into animals represents a process of degradation, Peter W. Coxon, "Another Look at Nebuchadnezzar's Madness," in *The Book of Daniel in the Light of New Findings*, ed. Adam S. van der Woude (Louvain: Peeters, 1993), 211–222; Gregory Mobley, "The Wild Man in the Bible and the Ancient Near East," *JBL* 116 (1997): 217–233; Matthias Henze, *Madness of King Nebuchadnezzar: The Ancient Near Eastern Origins and Early History of Interpretation of Daniel 4*, JSJSup 61 (Leiden: Brill, 1999); Shalom M. Paul, "The Mesopotamian Babylonian Background of Daniel 1–6," in *The Book of Daniel: Composition and Reception*, eds. John J. Collins and Peter W. Flint (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 2:55–68; Silviu Bunta, "The Mesu-Tree and the Animal Inside: Theomorphism and Teriomorphism in Daniel 4," in *The Theophaneia School: Jewish Roots of Eastern Christian Mysticism*, eds. Basil Lourié and Andrei Orlov (Sankt Petersburg: Byzantinorossika, 2007; repr. Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2009), 364–384.



on New Jerusalem.<sup>37</sup> As the Trito-Isaian book proves, especially Isa 65:16–25, the idea of new creation has prophetic roots:

Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: “Behold, my servants shall eat, but you shall be hungry; behold, my servants shall drink, but you shall be thirsty; behold, my servants shall rejoice, but you shall be put to shame; behold, my servants shall sing for gladness of heart, but you shall cry out for pain of heart, and shall wail for anguish of spirit. You shall leave your name to my chosen for a curse, and the Lord GOD will slay you; but his servants he will call by a different name. So that he who blesses himself in the land shall bless himself by the God of truth, and he who takes an oath in the land shall swear by the God of truth; because the former troubles are forgotten and are hid from my eyes. For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth (בורא שמים חדשים וארץ חדשה); and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind. But be glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy.”<sup>38</sup>

The concept of new creation is reiterated in the most ancient Enochic material, the *Book of the Luminaries* (possibly composed in the third century BCE):

The book about the motion of the heavenly luminaries, all as they are in their kinds, their jurisdiction, their time, their name, their origins, and their months which Uriel, the holy angel who was with me (and) who is their leader, showed me. The entire book about them, as it is, he showed me and how every year of the world will be forever, until a new creation lasting forever is made.<sup>39</sup>

Additionally, *The Epistle of Enoch*, another document pertaining to the same first Enochic corpus, envisions the eschatological reconstruction of the world following the expiation of every evil and the enthronement of the Great King in his heavenly glory:

After this there will arise an eighth week of righteousness, in which a sword will be given to all the righteous, to execute righteous judgment on all the

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<sup>37</sup> Lee, *The New Jerusalem in the Book of Revelation: A Study of Revelation 21–22 in the Light of Its Background in Jewish Tradition* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), 18–24. He also comments: “Therefore, it is possible to say that the New Jerusalem [in Isa 65:16–25] is the center of the New Creation. In the New Creation, the New Jerusalem is the place which reveals God’s sovereignty more gloriously than any place else, though the New Creation itself also reveals it. Therefore, without the New Jerusalem, the New Creation is meaningless. Accordingly, the restoration of Jerusalem results in the restoration of God’s sovereignty, and the restoration of God’s sovereignty in the restoration of creation (ibid., 21).”

<sup>38</sup> Isa 65:13–18.

<sup>39</sup> *1En.* 72:1. Trans. Nickelsburg and VanderKam, 96. The *Book of Luminaries*, also called the *Astronomical Book* seems to be composed in the third century BCE (Nickelsburg and VanderKam, *1Enoch*, 6). Scholars also mention the presence of the New Creation motif in *1En.* 10:16b–22 and 45–57 (e.g., Lee, *New Jerusalem*, 55–57 and 63–65).

wicked, and they will be delivered into their hands. And at its conclusion, they will acquire possessions in righteousness, and the temple of the kingdom of the Great One will be built in the greatness of its glory for all the generations of eternity. After this there will arise a ninth week, in which righteous law will be revealed to all the sons of the whole earth, and all the deeds of wickedness will vanish from the whole earth and descend to the everlasting pit, and all humankind will look to the path of everlasting righteousness. After this, in the tenth week, the seventh part, (will be) the everlasting judgment, and it will be executed on the watchers of the eternal heaven, (and a fixed time of the great judgment will be rendered among the holy ones). And the first heaven will pass away in it, and a new heaven will appear, and all the powers of the heavens will shine forever with sevenfold (brightness). After this there will be many weeks without number forever, in which they will do piety and righteousness, and from then on sin will never again be mentioned.<sup>40</sup>

A similar doctrine about an eschatological new creation appears in the *Book of Jubilees*:

And the angel of the presence who went before the camp of Israel took the tables of the divisions of the years—from the time of the creation—of the law and of the testimony of the weeks of the jubilees, according to the individual years, according to all the number of the jubilees [according, to the individual years], from the day of the [new] creation when the heavens and the earth shall be renewed and all their creation according to the powers of the heaven, and according to all the creation of the earth, until the sanctuary of the Lord shall be made in Jerusalem on Mount Zion, and all the luminaries be renewed for healing and for peace and for blessing for all the elect of Israel, and that thus it may be from that day and unto all the days of the earth.<sup>41</sup>

Another chapter of the same *Book of Jubilees* introduces the idea of eschatological holiness and describes the sanctification of the new world in these terms:

For the Lord has four places on the earth, the Garden of Eden, and the Mount of the East, and this mountain on which thou art this day, Mount Sinai, and Mount Zion (which) will be sanctified in the new creation for a sanctification of the earth; through it will the earth be sanctified from all (its) guilt and its uncleanness throughout the generations of the world.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> 1 En. 91:12–17. Trans. Nickelsburg and VanderKam, 142–143. Part of the *Epistle of Enoch*, the passage is dated to the second century BCE (*ibid.*, 12).

<sup>41</sup> *Jub.* 1:29. Trans. Wintermute, *OTP* 2:54–55. The idea of renewed luminaries also occurs in *Jub* 19:25: “And these will serve to establish heaven, and to strengthen the earth and to renew all of the lights which are above the firmament.”

<sup>42</sup> *Jub.* 4:26. Cf. 8:9: “And he knew that the Garden of Eden is the holy of holies, and the dwelling of the Lord, and Mount Sinai the centre of the desert, and Mount Zion—the centre of the navel of the earth: these three were created as holy places facing each other.”

Furthermore, several texts emerging in the period following the destruction of the Second Temple encompass the idea of new creation as well. For example, a few passages from the *Apocalypse of Abraham* (e.g., 21:1–4, 21:6 and 22:4–5), illustrate a new heavenly world with nuances echoing the aforementioned Trito-Isaiah:

And he said to me, “Look now beneath your feet at the firmament and understand the creation that was depicted of old on this expanse, (and) the creatures which are in it and the age prepared after it.” And (I saw) there the earth and its fruit, and its moving things and its things that had souls, and its host of men and the impiety of their souls and their justification, and their pursuit of their works and the abyss and its torments, and its lower depths and (the) perdition in it. And I saw there the sea and its islands, and its cattle and its fish, and Leviathan and his realm and his bed and his lairs, and the world which lay upon him, and his motions and the destruction he caused the world. I saw there the rivers and their upper (reaches) and their circles. And I saw there the garden of Eden and its fruits, and the source and the river flowing from it, and its trees and their flowering, making fruits, and I saw men doing justice in it, their food and their rest. And I saw there a great crowd of men and women and children, half of them on the right side of the portrayal, and half of them on the left side of the portrayal.<sup>43</sup>

Worth mentioning is a particular line from Pseudo-Philo, namely *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum* 3.10: *Et erit terra alia et celum aliud, habitaculum sempiternum*.<sup>44</sup> Another line of the same text—*LAB* 32.17—part of a chapter entitled the Song of Deborah, uses the expression: *Hymnizabo enim ei in innovatione creature*.<sup>45</sup> Meanwhile, a different document, the *Fourth/Second Book of Ezra*, comprehends a similar theory about a final renewal of the world, which additionally includes the conception that the new creation will be re-molded in its original state:

For my son the Messiah shall be revealed with those who are with him, and he shall make rejoice those who remain for four hundred years, and after these years my son (or: servant) the Messiah shall die, and all who draw

<sup>43</sup> *Apoc. Ab.* 21. Cf. Lee, *New Jerusalem*, 169–179. For the text, translation, and date of composition, see G.H. Box, *The Apocalypse of Abraham* (London: The Macmillan Company, 1918), xv; cf. R. Rubinkiewicz, “The Apocalypse of Abraham: A New Translation and Introduction,” in *OTP* 1:681–705, esp. 699.

<sup>44</sup> Howard Jacobson, *A Commentary on Pseudo-Philo's Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum: With Latin Text and English Translation* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 1:4; i.e., “There will be another earth and another heaven, an everlasting dwelling place” (*ibid.*, 1:93). For the post-70 CE dating of the text, see *ibid.*, 1:199–210.

<sup>45</sup> *LAB* 32.17 (Jacobson, 1:52).

human breath. And the world shall be turned back to primeval silence for seven days, as it was at the first beginnings; so that no one shall be left. And after seven days the world, which is not yet awake, shall be roused, and that which is corruptible shall perish. And the earth shall give back those who are asleep in it, and the dust those who rest in it; and the treasures shall give up the souls which have been committed to them. And the Most High shall be revealed upon the seat of judgment, and compassion shall pass away, mercy shall be made distant, and patience shall be withdrawn; but only judgment shall remain, truth shall stand, and faithfulness shall grow strong.<sup>46</sup>

A few verses later, the same thought reoccurs in the following expression:

I answered and said, "If I have found favor in thy sight, O Lord, show this also to thy servant: Whether after death, as soon as every one of us yields up his soul, we shall be kept in rest until those times come when thou wilt renew the creation, or whether we shall be tormented at once?"<sup>47</sup>

Another text addressing the theme of the new creation in post-Temple times can be found in *Second (Syriac) Book of Baruch*:

But as for you, if you prepare your hearts, to sow in them the fruits of the Law, it will protect you in that time in which the Mighty One will shake the whole creation. For after a short time the building of Zion will be shaken so that it may be built again. But that building will not remain, but will be uprooted again after a time, and will remain desolate until a time. And afterwards it must be renewed in glory and perfected forever. Therefore, we should not be as distressed about the evil which has now come as that which is still to be. For there will be a greater trial than these two tribulations when the Mighty One will renew his creation.<sup>48</sup>

Michael Stone observes that the last two passages—*4 Ezra* 7:30 and *2 Bar* 3:7, 44:9—can be compared with the *Epistle of Barnabas* 15:8:<sup>49</sup>

<sup>46</sup> *4/2 Ezra* 7:28–34. Trans. Metzger in *OTP* 1:525–559, with small revisions by Michael Stone from his Hermeneia commentary: *Fourth Ezra: A Commentary on the Book of Fourth Ezra* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 202–203. According to Stone, the book was "composed in the time of Domitian (81–96 CE)" (*ibid.*, 10). This description of the "day of Judgment" additionally includes the thought that this day will no longer need light from the sun, moon, and stars but "only the splendor of the glory of the Most High, by which all shall see what has been determined for them" (*4/2 Ezra* 7:39–44; trans. Stone, 203); cf. *Rev* 21:23; 22:5 and *Tg. Exod.* 12:42.

<sup>47</sup> *4/2 Ezra* 7:75 (Stone, 235).

<sup>48</sup> *2 Bar* 32:1–6. For the critical edition and English translation, see Daniel M. Gurtner, *Second Baruch: A Critical Edition of the Syriac Text. With Greek and Latin Fragments, English Translation, Introduction, and Concordances*, Jewish and Christian Text in Contexts and Related Studies (New York: T&T Clark, 2009), 69.

<sup>49</sup> Stone, *Fourth Ezra*, 217. For the texts, see *4/2 Ezra* 7:30: "And the world shall be turned

It is not the present sabbaths that are acceptable to me, but the one that I have made; on that sabbath, after I have set everything at rest, I will create the beginning of an eighth day (ἀρχὴν ἡμέρας ἀγδότης ποιήσω), which is the beginning of another world (ἄλλου κόσμου ἀρχὴν).<sup>50</sup>

This last document demonstrates that the idea eventually made its way in the earliest (Jewish) Christian texts. Moreover, even before Pseudo-Barnabas, the books of the New Testament took over the concept of new creation and reconceived it in the new intellectual milieu. For example, Gal 6:15 associates the “new creation” idea with the human being: “For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation (καινή κτίσις).”<sup>51</sup> Likewise, the celebrated and influential Rev 21:1–8 speaks in terms very similar to the texts cited above:

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband; and I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling of God is with men. He will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away.” And he who sat upon the throne said, “Behold, I make all things new.”<sup>52</sup>

One may identify some Isaianic resonances within the same chapter of Revelation 21:

And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine upon it, for the glory of God is its light, and its lamp is the Lamb. By its light shall the nations walk; and the kings of the earth shall bring their glory into it.<sup>53</sup>

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back to primeval silence for seven days, as it was at the first beginnings; so that no one shall be left.” Trans. Metzger, *OTP* 1:537. See also 2 *Bar* 3:7: “Or will the universe return to its nature and the world go back to its original silence?” Trans. Klijn, *OTP* 1:621. Cf. 2 *Bar* 44:9: “For everything will pass away which is corruptible, and everything that dies will go away, and all present time will be forgotten, and there will be no remembrance of the present time which is polluted by evils.” Trans. Klijn, *OTP* 1:634.

<sup>50</sup> *Ep. Barn.* 15:8, in Michael W. Holmes, ed. and trans., *The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), 428–429.

<sup>51</sup> The connection between the topic of the “new creation” and the human being will be further addressed within the next sub-chapter.

<sup>52</sup> Rev 21:1–5.

<sup>53</sup> Rev 21:22–24. Cf. Isa 60:1–3: “Arise, shine, Jerusalem, for your light has come; and over you the glory of the LORD has dawned. Though darkness covers the earth and dark night the nations, on you the LORD shines and over you his glory will appear; nations will journey towards your light and kings to your radiance.”

Likewise, the *Tractate Sanhedrin* of the *Babylonian Talmud* proves that the tradition regarding the eschatological re-creation of the world was also accepted in rabbinic milieus:

R. Hanan b. Tahlipha sent a message to R. Joseph: I met a man who possessed scrolls written in Assyrian characters and in the holy language. And to my question from where he got it, he answered: I hired myself to the Persian army, and among the treasures of Persia I found it. And it was written therein that after two thousand, two hundred and ninety-one years of the creation, the world will remain an orphan, many years will be the war of whales, and many more years will be the war of Gog and Magog, and the remainder will be the days of the Messiah. But the Holy One, blessed be He, will not renew the world before seven thousand have elapsed. And R. Aha b. R. Rabha said: After five thousand years from to-day.<sup>54</sup>

#### 4. THE ESCHATOLOGICAL RE-CREATION OF THE HUMAN BEING IN SECOND TEMPLE LITERATURE

It was in this context of a growing interest in the topic of the eschatological new creation that the idea of a renewed human being appeared. The aforementioned Trito-Isaianic passage regarding the new creation or the new Jerusalem additionally describes in paradisiacal tones the conditions the inhabitants of the new world will enjoy. These conditions include living in a just world, a perfect communication with God, peace, and, speaking generally, a sort of perfect society.<sup>55</sup>

In this regard, Lee connects this Isaianic text (Isa 65:16–25) and Isa 66:1–24, a passage introducing yet another aspect of the eschatological world, namely, the divine glory.<sup>56</sup> Isa 60:1–3 and 19–20 in particular clearly specify that the glory of God is the element in which the eschatological human existence will take place:<sup>57</sup>

Arise, shine (אורי), for your light (אור) has come, and the glory of the Lord (כבוד יהוה) rises upon you. See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the Lord rises upon you and his glory appears over

<sup>54</sup> *Sanh.* 11(97b). Cf. “The school of R. Ismael taught: One may learn it from glass-wares, which are made by human beings, and if they break there is a remedy for them, as they can be renewed: human beings, who are created by the spirit of the Lord, so much the more shall they be renewed (restored).” *Ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> Isa 65:12–25. See also Lee, *New Jerusalem*, 18–24.

<sup>56</sup> Lee, *New Jerusalem*, 24–26.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 34–36.

you. Nations will come to your light (אורך), and kings to the brightness (נגה) of your dawn. ... The sun will no more be your light (אור) by day, nor will the brightness (נגה) of the moon shine on you, for the Lord will be your everlasting light (יהוה לאור עולם), and your God will be your glory (אלהיך לתפארתך). Your sun will never set again, and your moon will wane no more; the Lord will be your everlasting light, and your days of sorrow will end.

There is an important peculiarity worth mentioning in this discussion; namely, that human transformation does not seem to be present in Isaiah. Rather, the saved people live happily and eternally in Yahweh's light, as opposed to being transformed into light.

Turning our attention to Dan 12:1–3, one notes the text's considerable significance while illustrating the human transformation into glory. The text serves as one of the earliest materials to illustrate this process. In this regard, according to the text, the resurrected ones will possess a luminous constitution:

Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued. Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt. Those who have insight will shine brightly like the brightness of the expanse of heaven (המשכלים יזהרו כוהר), and those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars (בכוכבים) forever and ever.

Similarly, Wis 3:7 refers to the souls of the righteous in these terms: "In the time of their visitation they will shine forth, and will run like sparks through the stubble." Likewise, another document, the *Book of Jubilees*, discloses some traces of the notion of eschatological human recreation in the following lines:

And Moses fell on his face and prayed and said, "O Lord my God, do not forsake Thy people and Thy inheritance, so that they should wander in the error of their hearts, and do not deliver them into the hands of their enemies, the Gentiles, lest they should rule over them and cause them to sin against Thee. Let thy mercy, O Lord, be lifted up upon Thy people, and create in them an upright spirit, and let not the spirit of Beliar rule over them to accuse them before Thee, and to ensnare them from all the paths of righteousness, so that they may perish from before Thy face. But they are Thy people and Thy inheritance, which thou hast delivered with thy great power from the hands of the Egyptians: create in them a clean heart and a holy spirit, and let them not be ensnared in their sins from henceforth until eternity." And the Lord said unto Moses: "I know their contrariness and their thoughts and their stiffneckedness, and they will not be obedient till they confess their

own sin and the sin of their fathers. And after this they will turn to Me in all uprightness and with all (their) heart and with all (their) soul, and I will circumcise the foreskin of their heart and the foreskin of the heart of their seed, and I will create in them a holy spirit, and I will cleanse them so that they shall not turn away from Me from that day unto eternity.<sup>58</sup>

The distinct feature of the passage above resides in introducing a special demiurgic agent which performs the new creation. It is the regenerating Spirit or creator Spirit, a quite common idea of the Bible, frequently present from Gen 1:1 to the Ezekielean episode of resurrection (Ezek 37:1–10) and Ps 104:30. A psalm of Solomon, perhaps a first-century BCE text, describes in similar terms the eschatological human condition renewed through the activity of the Spirit:

And (relying) upon his God, throughout his days he will not stumble; for God will make him mighty by means of (His) holy spirit, and wise by means of the spirit of understanding, with strength and righteousness. And the blessing of the Lord (will be) with him: he will be strong and stumble not; His hope (will be) in the Lord: who then can prevail against him? (He will be) mighty in his works, and strong in the fear of God, (He will be) shepherding the flock of the Lord faithfully and righteously, and will suffer none among them to stumble in their pasture. He will lead them all aright, and there will be no pride among them that any among them should be oppressed. This (will be) the majesty of the king of Israel whom God knoweth; He will raise him up over the house of Israel to correct him. His words (shall be) more refined than costly gold, the choicest; In the assemblies he will judge the peoples, the tribes of the sanctified. His words (shall be) like the words of the holy ones in the midst of sanctified peoples. Blessed be they that shall be in those days, In that they shall see the good fortune of Israel which God shall bring to pass in the gathering together of the tribes.<sup>59</sup>

Additionally, the *First Book of Enoch* 50—part of the *Book of Parables*, a text produced at the turn of the era—alludes, as well, to the luminous

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<sup>58</sup> *Jub.* 1:18–25. See also *The Book of Jubilees: A Critical Text*, ed. and trans. James C. Vanderkam (Louvain: Peeters, 1989). VanderKam considers that the book was written between ca. 165–100 BCE (cf. James C. VanderKam, *The Book of Jubilees* [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001], 21).

<sup>59</sup> *Pss. Sol.* 17:42–50. Trans. Wright, in *OTP* 2:668. See also *Pss. Sol.* 18:6–9: “May God cleanse Israel against the day of mercy and blessing, against the day of choice when He bringeth back His anointed. Blessed shall they be that shall be in those days, in that they shall see the goodness of the Lord which He shall perform for the generation that is to come, under the rod of chastening of the Lord’s anointed in the fear of his God, in the spirit of wisdom and righteousness and strength; that he may direct (every) man in the works of righteousness by the fear of God, that he may establish them all before the Lord.” For the dating of this text, see Wright, *OPT* 2:640.



constitution which the holy ones will own at the end of time: “In those days a change will occur for the holy and chosen, and the light of days will dwell upon them, and glory and honor will return to the holy.”<sup>60</sup> The shining countenance of the righteous in eschatological times finds a clearer expression in *1 Enoch* 58: “Blessed are you, righteous and chosen, for glorious (will be) your lot. The righteous will be in the light of the sun, and the chosen in the light of everlasting life.”<sup>61</sup> Another obvious formulation of this idea occurs in *1 Enoch* 62: “And the righteous and the chosen will have arisen from the earth, and have ceased to cast down their faces, and have put on them the garment of glory.”<sup>62</sup>

One may conclude that several Second Temple documents reflect the tradition that human beings will be re-created at the eschaton. In addition, some of these materials assert that humans will enjoy an existence within the divine glory.

#### 5. THE ADAM OF GLORY AND THE GLORY OF THE ESCHATOLOGICAL HUMAN BEING

We must include in this discussion a particular late Second Temple trend which incorporates Adam—commonly seen as a protological figure—in this discourse about the end of the world. Additionally, Adam’s prelapsarian ontological status was presumed to be that of a glorious being. As we have indicated above, several Second Temple materials testify to the circulation of the idea that Adam’s original status was luminous and quasi-angelic. As Crispin H.T. Fletcher-Louis states, “[t]his community [i.e., of Qumran] believed that in its original, true and redeemed state humanity is divine (and/or angelic).”<sup>63</sup> Meanwhile, the Qumranites also deemed that human beings would be restored to the luminous prelapsarian status.

Employing a complex network of Jewish materials (some of which this study has employed as well), Fletcher-Louis argues in his monograph that the eschatological human being will enjoy “all the glory of Adam.” A

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<sup>60</sup> *1 En.* 50:1. Trans. Nickelsburg and Vanderkam, 64. However, the idea is already present in the *Dream Visions* (*1 En.* 89:40) which describes the righteous as sheep entering a glorious land, a book composed in the time of Judas Macabeus (164–160 BCE); cf. Nickelsburg and Vanderkam, *1 Enoch*, 9.

<sup>61</sup> *1 En* 58:2–3.

<sup>62</sup> *1 En* 62:15. Cf. *1 En* 62:3; *2 Bar.* 4:16; *2 Bar.* 54:13–16; 1QH xvii 1.

<sup>63</sup> Fletcher-Louis, *Glory of Adam*, 476.

remarkable passage of the *Community Rule* synthesizes, in a wonderful manner, the eschatological re-creation of the human being, its purification from any unclean spirit, and its refashioning to the primordial glory of Adam:<sup>64</sup>

God, in the mysteries of his knowledge and in the wisdom of his glory, has determined an end to the existence of injustice and on the appointed time of the visitation he will obliterate it for ever. Then truth shall rise up forever (in) the world, for it has been defiled in paths of wickedness during the dominion of injustice until the time appointed for judgment decided. Then God will refine, with his truth, all man's deeds, and will purify for himself the structure of man (גבני איש), ripping out all spirit of injustice from the innermost part of his flesh, and cleansing him with the spirit of holiness (ברוח קודש) from every wicked deeds. He will sprinkle over him the spirit of truth like lustral water (in order to cleanse him) from all the abhorrences of deceit and (from) the defilement of the unclean spirit, in order to instruct the upright ones with knowledge of the Most High, and to make understand the wisdom of the sons of heaven to those of perfect behavior. For those God has chosen for an everlasting covenant and to them shall belong all the glory of Adam (כול כבוד אדם).<sup>65</sup>

Within the same era, the *Damascus Document* makes the following affirmation about the restored people of Israel:

But God, in his wonderful mysteries, atoned for their iniquity and pardoned their sin. And he built for them a safe house in Israel, such as there has not been since ancient times, not even till now. Those who remained steadfast in it will acquire eternal life, and all the glory of Adam (כול כבוד אדם) is for them.<sup>66</sup>

Additionally, two other key materials for our discussion are the *Life of Adam and Eve* and one of its versions, the *Apocalypse of Moses*. In addition to the fact that these two documents conceive of the primordial Adam as a luminous being, *Vita* 13–16 recounts the fall of Satan who declined the divine commandment to worship Adam, the image of God: “And Michael went out and called all the angels, saying, ‘Worship the image of the Lord God, as the Lord God has instructed.’”<sup>67</sup> The text correlates, therefore, the ideas of divine

<sup>64</sup> The *Community Rule* is largely understood to be a text written around 100 BCE.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 1QS iv 18–23. For the critical edition and English translation, see *The Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition*, ed. and trans. Florentino Garcia Martinez and Eibert J.C. Tigchelaar (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 78–79.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., CD iii (= 4Q269 2)18–20. Trans. Martinez and Tigchelaar, 554–555.

<sup>67</sup> *Vita* 14:1. Trans. Johnson, *OTP* 2:262. Cf. *Syb. Or.* 8.442–445; *Gen. Rab.* 8–10; *B. Bat.* 58a;

glory, the image of God, and the primordial Adam. However, the passage describes this Adam as created, and not as the eternal Image of God.

Adam's saga in the *Apocalypse* continues with his repentance and the way God restores, postmortem, the forefather to his original condition. The narrative stages the angels coming on earth, taking Adam's dead body to Paradise (*Apoc. Mos.* 39:1), and washing his soul three times in the presence of God. The Lord God commands the angels to then cover Adam's body with cloths of linen brought from Paradise:

[O]ne of the six-winged seraphim came and carried Adam off to the Lake of Acheron and washed him three times in the presence of God. He lay three hours, and so the Lord of all, sitting on his holy throne, stretched out his hands and took Adam and handed him over to the archangel Michael, saying to him, "Take him up into Paradise, to the third heaven, and leave (him) there until that great and fearful day which I am about to establish for the world."<sup>68</sup>

Then he [God] spoke to the archangel Michael, "Go into Paradise in the third heaven and bring me three cloths of linen and silk (τρεις συνδονας βυσσινας και σηρικας)." And God said to Michael, Gabriel, Uriel, and Raphael, "Cover Adam's body with the cloths and bring oil from the oil of fragrance and pour it on him (ελαιον εκ του ελαιου της ευωδιας εκχεατε επ' αυτον)."<sup>69</sup>

The gesture of covering Adam with white clothes and oil echoes the Enochic passage where God commands his angels to cover with garments of glory and anoint the inspired scribe Enoch.<sup>70</sup> The *Vita* relates in the same fashion how angels take Adam's soul and clothe him with three linen garments:

*Apoc. Sedr.* 5–7. See also David Steenburg, "The Worship of Adam and Christ as the Image of God," *JSNT* 39 (1990): 95–109.

<sup>68</sup> *Apoc. Mos.* 37:3–5. Trans. Johnson, *OTP* 2:289–291.

<sup>69</sup> *Apoc. Mos.* 40:1–2. The story appears in similar forms in all the five extant versions; cf. Anderson and Stone, *Synopsis*, 68–71.

<sup>70</sup> See 2 *En* 22:8–10 [A]: "The Lord said to Michael, 'Take Enoch, and extract (him) from the earthly clothing (земныхъ ризъ). And anoint him with the delightful oil (елеемъ благовимъ), and put (him) into the clothes of glory (ризы славы).' And Michael extracted me from my clothes. He anointed me with the delightful oil; and the appearance of that oil is greater than the greatest light (видѣние масла паче свѣта великаго), its ointment is like sweet dew, and its fragrance like myrrh; and its shining is like the sun. And I gazed at all of myself, and I had become like one of the glorious ones (яко единъ шитъ славы), and there was no observable difference." Trans. Andersen, *OTP* 1:139 (J version is very similar). For the critical edition, see André Vaillant, *Le livre des secrets d'Énoch: Texte slave et traduction française* (Paris: Institut d'Études Slaves, 1952), 24–26. It is worth mentioning that 1 *En* 71:11 already reports a change in Enoch' nature. Thus, we find Enoch's spirit transformed in front of the heavenly throne and immediately after that performing the angelic function of blessing, glorifying, and extolling with a great voice as well as by the spirit of the power.

“Again the Lord said to the angels Michael and Uriel: ‘Bring me three linen shrouds (*sindones bissinas*) and stretch them over (*expandite super*) Adam.’”<sup>71</sup>

## 6. PAULINE *EIKONIC* SOTERIOLOGY

This section will argue that Paul synthesized the two Adam/Anthropos trends of exaltation and hypostasization into an intricate theory of salvation which I have called “*eikonic* soteriology.” Even before the *Vita* 12–14, Paul linked the protological Adam with the ideas of divine glory and Image of God. In addition, it was in his theology that the *eikonic* anthropology of Genesis 1 (Adam is the *eikon* of God) became connected with the Second Temple tradition about the eschatological reconstruction of the human being. As a distinctive note, the archetype of the eschatological reconstruction is not the primordial (even glorious) Adam but Jesus Christ’s Divine Image.

As addressed within the chapter devoted to the emergence of Anthropos speculations, Paul defended the idea that Christ was the Image and Form of God. Furthermore, in 1 Cor 2:8 Paul also calls Christ the “Lord of Glory,” an ancient term echoing the biblical “Yahweh Sabaoth” (Lord of Hosts), a title obviously ascribed to Yahweh. Hence, the reconstruction will take place according to the primeval model of the Divine Image and Anthropos, in Pauline theology identical with Jesus Christ. Since the human being is re-fashioned according to the Image of God, an appropriate name of this type of salvific theory would be “*eikonic* soteriology.”

One’s review of 1 Cor 11:7 illustrates clearly that Paul conceives of the human being as the image of God: “A man (*ἀνὴρ*) must not cover his head, because man is the image (*εἰκὼν*) of God and the mirror of his glory (*δόξα*.” It is also evident that this image involves a mirroring of God’s glory. In his seminal study on Paul’s Glory Christology, Carry Newman describes Pauline soteriology in *eikonic* terms. While commenting on Rom 3:23 (“all have sinned and are falling short of the glory of God”), Newman avows that, through Adam’s fall, humanity lost something that was making the connection between God and humans, in fact the original glory of God: “Normally interpreted as a reference to the lost glory that Adam (supposedly) possessed at creation, this verse, however, refers to the relationship between God and humanity.”<sup>72</sup> Paul sees, therefore, the ontological status of

<sup>71</sup> *Vita* 48:1.

<sup>72</sup> Newman, *Paul’s Glory-Christology*, 225. In his footnote to this commentary, Newman

the human being in similar terms with Jesus' body of glory (τῷ σώματι τῆς δόξης; Phil 3:21). Within the Pauline discourse, the terms of "glory," "image," and "form" function in a very connected way, almost synonymously.

From the fallen condition, humanity has to evolve and be transformed into the Divine Image. Regarding the final destiny or the goal of human existence, Paul understands this concept as referring to the renewal according to the Divine Image. Col 3:9–10, for example, reflects the restoration process as the whole intention of Christ's economy:

you have discarded the old human nature (τὸν παλαιὸν ἄνθρωπον) and the conduct (ταῖς πράξεσιν) that goes with it, and have put on the new nature (τὸν νέον) which is constantly being renewed (τὸν ἀνακαινούμενον) in the image of its Creator (κατ' εἰκόνα τοῦ κτίσαντος) and brought to know God.

The passage regards human salvation as a transformation from one *anthropos* into another; from the old and fallen human into a new one, which is a new creation in itself and an imitation of the Creator's Image.

The final aim of the human being is to become an *anthropos* which is an icon of the Heavenly Anthropos. Paul affirms this in 1 Cor 15:45–49 while interpreting both Gen 2:7 and 1:27:

It is in this sense that scripture says, "The first man (ὁ πρῶτος ἄνθρωπος), Adam, became a living creature (ψυχὴν ζῶσαν)," whereas the last Adam (ὁ ἔσχατος Ἀδάμ) has become a life-giving spirit (πνεῦμα ζωοποιοῦν). ... The first man is from earth, made of dust; the second man (ὁ δεῦτερος ἄνθρωπος) is from heaven. The man made of dust is the pattern of all who are made of dust, and the heavenly man is the pattern of all the heavenly. As we have worn the likeness of the man made of dust (τὴν εἰκόνα τοῦ χιτοῦ), so we shall wear the likeness of the heavenly man (τὴν εἰκόνα τοῦ ἐπουρανίου).<sup>73</sup>

The text presents Adam and Jesus as two anthropomorphic models or patterns: Adam is the first man, the earthly one, and Jesus the heavenly. Paul visualizes the human being as a flexible organism able to be fashioned or molded according to one of these two models. In other words, Paul believes the human being functions as a copy or a likeness (*eikon*) of one of the

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continues his thought in the following way: "In early Jewish materials there is indeed a tradition which speaks of a restoration of (prelapsarian?) Glory to Adam; see *Bar.* 4:16; 2 *Bar.* 54:13–16; CD iii 20; 1QS iv 23; 1QH xvii 15; 4Q504 fr. 8 recto; *T. Abr.* 11:8–9; *Life of Adam and Eve* 12:1; *Apoc. Mos.* 21:2, 6; 39:2; cf. 4QpPs<sup>a</sup> 1–10 iii 2 (= 4Q171); *1 Enoch* 89:44–45; Rom. 3:23." (*Ibid.*, n. 30.)

<sup>73</sup> For the two Adams in Paul, see, for example, Charles K. Barrett, *From First Adam to Last: A Study in Pauline Theology* (New York: Scribner, 1962) and Robin Scroggs, *The Last Adam: A Study in Pauline Anthropology* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966).

models. The transformation and renewal will consist in the change from one likeness to the other; from bearing one *eikon* to the other. To illustrate Paul's thought, 2 Cor 3:18 makes evident that this transformation involves the work of the Spirit and a subtle increasing presence of the divine glory:

And because for us there is no veil over the face, we all see as in a mirror the glory of the Lord (τὴν δόξαν κυρίου), and we are being transformed (μεταμορφούμεθα) into his likeness (τὴν αὐτὴν εἰκόνα) with ever-increasing glory (ἀπὸ δόξης εἰς δόξαν), through the power of the Lord who is the Spirit.

The increasing glory of the human being comes actually as the result of contemplating Jesus' divine glory as in a mirror. The human being is created in a permanent process according to the Divine Image it contemplates. Thus, the epistemic process of contemplation generates the ontological mirroring process in which an increasing glory is imprinted in the being of the one who contemplates. Eph 4:22–24 emphasizes also an ethical facet of this transformation from the old to the new *anthropos*:

Renouncing your former way of life, you must lay aside the old human nature (τὸν παλαιὸν ἄνθρωπον) which, deluded by its desires, is in the process of decay: you must be renewed in mind and spirit (ἀνανεοῦσθαι δὲ τῷ πνεύματι τοῦ νοῦς ὑμῶν), and put on the new nature (ἐνδύσασθαι τὸν καινὸν ἄνθρωπον) created in God's likeness (τὸν κατὰ θεὸν κτισθέντα), which shows itself in the upright and devout life called for by the truth.<sup>74</sup>

*Eikonic* soteriology, therefore, represents in its first form the transformation from being the *eikon* of Adam into the *eikon* of the glorious Jesus. Again, human beings are not transformed into Adam's prelapsarian image or glory, as in Qumran theology, but into Christ's image: the *eikon* of the Heavenly Anthropos and the second Adam.

Considering in more detail the eschatological destiny of the human being, Carrey Newman ponders that it is the heavenly glory of Christ, not that of the prelapsarian Adam.<sup>75</sup> Newman understands this process as an *imitatio Christi*, a repetition of the death-resurrection event:

Paul's autobiographical narrative presupposes that he has experienced the end, death/resurrection, and that in the "middle" of his narration, i.e., the time between Christophany and parousia, Paul seeks a mastery of death through a

<sup>74</sup> See also van Kooten's *Paul's Anthropology in Context* for the intricate modalities in which the ethical facet of the process is interrelated with epistemic and ontological dimensions.

<sup>75</sup> E.g., Newman, *Paul's Glory-Christology*, 209–211, 224–228; cf. van Kooten's *Paul's Anthropology in Context*.

re-enactment of Christophany—dying that he might rise. Paul patterns his Christian narration after his own story: in the Christophany Paul died and was reborn. Though Paul acknowledges a threat of unnatural death, or end, he describes the eschatological goal of transformation as conformity to Jesus' resurrection body of glory.<sup>76</sup>

Commenting on 2 Cor 3:18, Newman shows that the theophany of Jesus as Divine Glory opens a path of transformation accomplished in the eschatological times when Adam will be clothed in the divine glory of the Heavenly Anthropos:

Εἰκών and δόξα partake of the same paradigmatic field: by beholding the resurrected Glory of God in Christ (in the preaching of the gospel), one is transformed into the image of Christ. That is, the revelation of Christ as Glory (ἀπὸ δόξης) inaugurates a process of transformation which ultimately resolves into a final transformation in the Glory of Christ (εἰς δόξαν).<sup>77</sup>

This conception about salvation would have not been possible without the Pauline extension and translation of the demiurgic function of the Son of God from creation to the eschaton. Thus, another major idea of *eikonic* soteriology consists in the christological divine title and function of Demiurge. Christ is able to re-create humanity at the end of time because he was also its Demiurge who first fashioned it *in illo tempore*. Thus, Paul, or the Pauline tradition, extends the demiurgic attributes of the Son of God from the primordial times to the eschaton:

He [i.e., Jesus Christ] will transfigure (μετασχηματίσει) our humble bodies, and give them a form like that of his own glorious body (σύμμορφον τῷ σώματι τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ), by that power (ἐνέργειαν) which enables him to make all things subject to himself.<sup>78</sup>

In this instance, Paul appears to conceive of both the Father and the Son as deeply involved in this process of *eikonic* salvation. The apostle envisions in *eikonic* terms the way the Father designs the economy of salvation: “For those whom God knew before ever they were, he also ordained to share the likeness of his Son (συμμόρφους τῆς εἰκόνος τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ), so that he might be the eldest (τὸν πρωτότοκον) among a large family of brothers” (Rom 8:29). In Phil 2:6–7, Paul expresses the incarnation moment itself in *eikonic* language insofar as he describes it as a metamorphosis, as a process of

<sup>76</sup> Newman, *Paul's Glory-Christology*, 210.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 227.

<sup>78</sup> Phil 3:21. Cf. 2 Cor 3:18; Col 3:10; Rom 8:29.

exchanging forms from the form (μορφή) of God to the form (μορφή) of the slave, or the human likeness (ὁμοίωμα):

He was in the form of God (ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ); yet he laid no claim to equality with God, but made himself nothing (ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν), assuming the form of a slave (μορφήν δούλου λαβών). Bearing the human likeness (ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων), sharing the human lot, he humbled himself, and was obedient, even to the point of death, death on a cross.

In conclusion, Pauline anthropology conceives of the original condition of the human being as a luminous image of Christ, a protological condition identical with the final destiny of the human being. This reshaping into the primordial status is possible through a new divine demiurgic effort. Additionally, such a transformation, or reshaping, is possible through the kenotic act of the incarnation of the Divine Anthropos, which was a change from the form of glory into the form of the servant. Thus, this change of form and the descent of the Heavenly Anthropos make possible the eventual ascension and exaltation of the fallen Adam. Pauline anthropological and soteriological discourses articulate, therefore, a synthesis of the two Adam/Anthropos trends, since the fallen Adam is exalted through the divine descent of the Heavenly Image or Anthropos in order to become a glorious icon of this Heavenly Image. For that reason, human salvation becomes an *eikonic* soteriology.

## 7. CONCLUSION

At the end of this excursion into the roots of *eikonic* soteriology we can assert that early paschal writings borrow massively from the Pauline conception of *eikonic* soteriology. While previous biblical and Second Temple texts envision an eschatological re-creation of the world and human beings, and also conceive of the reconstruction of humanity according to the glorious lines of the pre-lapsarian Adam, Paul inserts an additional complexity in this discussion. According to his position, the eschatological condition of the human being will not imitate the design of the primordial Adam but that of the Divine Image, the pre-incarnate Jesus who was also the prototype of the first Adam. Moreover, Paul synthesizes the two Adam/Anthropos trends, since the Divine Image descends and assumes the humble form of the fallen Adam in order to make Adam capable to be again exalted and imitate the glory of the Divine Image. In addition, Paul regards Adam's exaltation as a re-creation of his primordial glorious condition, when Jesus reactivates his demiurgic powers used *in illo tempore*.



As I have shown in a previous study, Paul's *eikonic* soteriology of re-creation will have a large and sustained influence, starting from Irenaeus and continuing with Athanasius, Ephrem, the Cappadocians, and Augustine, to name just the main representatives.<sup>79</sup> Within this context, it is no wonder that the paschal writers studied in this chapter inherited this tradition and remodeled it in their own intellectual contexts. Such authors as Tertullian and Methodius developed this version of *eikonic* soteriology in which God saves humanity by refashioning it. Unlike them, Melito and Pseudo-Hippolytus elaborated an *eikonic* soteriology of liberation, a doctrine about the salvation of the human being from the captivity and slavery of death.

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<sup>79</sup> See Giulea, "Eikonic Soteriology." Like Tertullian and Methodius, the Cappadocians will include in their paschal theology and further develop the *eikonic* soteriology of re-creation, effecting a change from the Asiatic tradition of Melito and Pseudo-Hippolytus; see Giulea, "Cappadocian Paschal Christology."

## CHAPTER SIX

### DIVINE WARRIOR CHRISTOLOGY AND THE SOTERIOLOGY OF THE DIVINE COMBAT

The two paradigms of *eikonic* soteriology assume two distinct christological titles and functions. While the *eikonic* soteriology of re-creation envisions Christ as a Demiurge, the *eikonic* soteriology of liberation portrays him as a Divine Warrior. Since we have already investigated the Demiurge title and function in the previous chapter, this chapter will focus on “Divine Warrior Christology” and its corresponding soteriology, which in its own way represents a theorization of considerable complexity. An obvious presence in such ancient materials as *Lugale*, the *Anzû Epic*, *Enūma Eliš*, the Ba’al Cycle, the Kumarbi Cycle, and Hesiod’s *Theogony*, the mythical narrative formula of the Divine Warrior (also known as the combat myth) opens a new chapter in the *Chaoskampf* materials of the Hebrew Bible. In all these texts the Divine Warrior fights the primordial chaos and saves his favourite people, either his divine family—as in the aforementioned Mesopotamian, Canaanite, and Greek materials—or, as in Scripture, his people, Israel. In its own way, the Hebrew Bible seems to undertake a notable turn regarding the saved characters—from gods to the people of Israel, therefore from the divine realm to the human existence. As a Divine Warrior, Yahweh is no longer the savior of his divine court or the savior of his celestial family but particularly the rescuer of his holy people.

Nevertheless, the narrative formula of the divine combat equally appears in the earliest Christian documents dedicated to the festival of Pascha. For instance, in his *Peri Pascha*, Origen develops an allegorical interpretation of the Passover report of Exodus 12. In his interpretation, he understands the biblical story as a pre-figuration of Christ’s combat with Death for the salvation of humankind and a pre-figuration of the eschatological return of the whole humanity to the celestial Father. The story regarding Christ’s combat with Death certainly embodies the Christian expression of what Frank M. Cross labelled, “the myth of the divine warrior.”<sup>1</sup> Origen’s discourse also

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<sup>1</sup> See Frank M. Cross, Jr., *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973), 91–111.

incorporates the idea that Christ—at the same time serving as warrior and sacrificial lamb—offers himself to be consumed at the Easter celebration.<sup>2</sup> The author avers, in *Pasch.* 30–31, that every participant in the paschal Eucharist should assume a priestly condition, then sacrifice and eat the invisible, intelligible, and mysterious body of the Logos-Christ:

[S]ome partake (μεταλαμβάνουσιν) of its *head*, other of its hands, others of its breast, others of its *entrails*, still others of its thighs, and some even of its *feet*, where there is not much flesh, each partaking of it according to his own capacity (ἐκάστου κατὰ τὴν ἰδίαν μεταλαμβάνοντος δύναμιν ἀπ' αὐτοῦ). Thus it is that we partake of a part of the true Lamb according to our capacity to partake of the Word of God (μεταλαμβάνοντες τοῦ λόγου τοῦ θεοῦ). There are some who partake of the head, if you wish, of each part of the head, for example, of the ears so that, *having ears*, they can *hear* his words. Those who *taste* of the eyes *will see* clearly; *lest you dash your foot against a stone*. Those who taste the hands are the *workers* who no longer have *drooping hands* which are *closed against giving*.<sup>3</sup>

It is with these new ideas in mind that the present chapter will argue that the pre-Nicene paschal writings created a new and distinct paradigm of the divine combat formula. Three particular paschal documents, ascribed to Pseudo-Hippolytus, Origen, and Pseudo-Chrysostom, envision the feast as the divine sacrifice of Christ's self-offering. And yet, since the texts redefine the Divine Warrior's nature as noetic, the feast becomes the consumption of Christ's noetic body, an ingestion which dissolves the boundaries between the human and divine condition, while transforming the human individual into a quasi-divine being.

### 1. MELITO OF SARDIS: THE PASCHAL CHRIST AS DIVINE WARRIOR

A few verses of Melito's *Peri Pascha* witness the presence of the Divine Warrior story. Although the text does not include the idea of noetic consumption of Christ's flesh, the language of the divine combat is already evident, for instance, in *PP* 102. Its context, especially *PP* 100–102, represents a short history of salvation in itself: Jesus, as heavenly Lord (Κύριος), discovers on earth his creation, or humanity, enslaved by death and suffering. Christ puts on humanity (ἄνθρωπος) as a garment, assuming the suffering and the death of the enslaved. He liberates afterwards the condemned human being (ὁ

<sup>2</sup> See *PP* 46–49.

<sup>3</sup> Origen, *Pasch.* 30.15–31.11.

κατάδικος), infuses it with life (ἐζωοποίησα), and resuscitates it (ἀνίστημι). He destroys Death, triumphs over the enemy, and ties the powerful one at the bottom of hell (*PP* 102). At the opposite pole of creation, Christ takes human being to the heights of heaven. Subsequently, Melito portrays Christ as a general (στρατηγός).<sup>4</sup> A similar narrative of salvation depicts Jesus as assuming the suffering humanity, enslaved by the demon, in order to liberate it.<sup>5</sup> While Death is covered with shame and the demon mourns, humanity is transferred from slavery to freedom, from darkness to light, from death to life, and from tyranny to eternal royalty.

## 2. PSEUDO-HIPPOLYTUS: PASCHAL LITURGY AND THE CONSUMPTION OF CHRIST'S NOETIC BODY

Pseudo-Hippolytus, Origen, and Pseudo-Chrysostom (*In sanctum Pascha*) instill new elements in this story and create a narrative of much more philosophical intricacy. Within their texts, the myth includes not only the Divine Warrior's victory over death, but also the paschal Eucharist understood in this context as a sacred banquet made possible by the sacrifice of the Warrior. This conception develops an earlier Christian tradition present in Heb 9:23–26, a biblical passage presenting Jesus Christ as both the High Priest and the Sacrificial Offer on the heavenly altar. Paschal writers will further situate the process of consumption on a present, liturgical, immaterial, and noetic dimension of reality.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup> *PP* 105.818.

<sup>5</sup> *PP* 66–68.

<sup>6</sup> The idea may have connections with the various early Christian conceptions of heavenly food, such as bread or fish, as one can see in R.H. Hiers and C.A. Kennedy, "Bread and Fish Eucharist in the Gospels and Early Christian Art," *PRSt.* 3, no. 1 (1976): 21–48. See also Smit, *Fellowship and Food*. However, to the extent that the Eucharist is deifying and represents an actual participation in God's eternal life, the paschal banquet in itself may be seen as (pre-) eschatological. One may use such terminologies as "anticipated eschatology" or "inaugurated eschatology," as discussed by Grant Macaskill in his *Revealed Wisdom and Inaugurated Eschatology in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 8. The notion of mystery (*râzâ*) is also essential for the paschal hymns of Ephrem the Syrian who mentions an invisible, hidden (*kâsyâ*) defeat of Satan in Christ's visible (*gâlyâ*) death (*Az.* 4,5 [SC 502:68]). Ephrem may have taken over the paschal mystery theology developed in Asia Minor. Stuart G. Hall has already suggested that the notions of model/type and reality/antitype is present in Melito (*PP* 4), Ps-Hippolytus (*IP* 2.2), and Ephrem (*Epiphany* 3.17); see Hall, *Melito*, 5, n. 4. Moreover, the image of the cosmic cross occurs both in Ps-Hippolytus (cf. *IP* 51) and Ephrem

In the second part of the homily, Pseudo-Hippolytus draws a summary of Christ's divine economy and discloses the fight between the Logos and Death (θάνατος; *IP* 48.26; 49.2), called as well the "last Enemy" (ἔσχατος ἐχθρός ... θάνατος; *IP* 48.25–26; cf. ἐχθρός; *IP* 55.4). The author also mentions the fight of the Logos with the Dragon (δράκων; *IP* 53.5), the "Beast" (θηρίον; *IP* 57.5), and the "principalities of the air" (ἀέριαι ἀρχαί; *IP* 51.39–40). Pseudo-Hippolytus portrays Christ through such royal and military titles as the "eternal King" (βασιλεύς αἰώνιος; *IP* 46.19), the "King of Glory" (βασιλεύς τῆς δόξης; *IP* 46.27–31), the "Lord of the Powers" (κύριος τῶν δυνάμεων; *IP* 46.30; 32), the "Commander-in-Chief of the Great Power" (ἀρχιστράτηγος τῆς μεγάλης δυνάμεως; *IP* 55.7–8), and the "Son of the Most High" (υἱὸς ὑψίστου; *IP* 45.4), commissioned by his Father to rescue humanity. One may turn to the following passage, a few verses illustrating these biblical divine titles:

From heaven he (the Logos) saw us tyrannized by death (ὑπὸ τοῦ θανάτου τυραννουμένους), bound and loosed at the same time in the chains of death (φθοράς), traversing the fatal road which has no point of return. He came and assumed the first man's nature according to the design of the Father (ἐν βουλαῖς πατρικαῖς), and he did not entrust to his angels and archangels the charge of our souls, but he himself, the Word (λόγος), undertook the entire challenge (lit. "fight, battle, contest:" ὄλον τὸν ἀγῶνα) for us in obedience to his Father's orders (ταῖς πατρῴαις ἐντολαῖς).<sup>7</sup>

In this martial setting, Christ prepares himself for the battle with the Beast in a very peculiar way, removing his divine garments and assuming human flesh as a new vestment. In so doing, he fights undressed of his divine power, in absolute humility and self-emptiness (κένωσις): "And although he had permeated all things with himself, Christ stripped himself naked to war (γυμνὸς ἀνταπεδύσατο) against the powers of the air."<sup>8</sup> The war, nevertheless, was not only against Death and the powers of the dark, but also against the passions of the soul. After conquering the passions, as well, Jesus commences a renewal of the entire human being:

Since he ran to victory (τρέχων τὸν ἐπινίκιον) in the spiritual contest (τὸν ὑπὲρ ψυχῆς ἀγῶνα) he received on his sacred brow the crown of thorns, effacing the entire ancient curse of the race, and eradicating the thorny undergrowth of sin from the world with his divine head.<sup>9</sup>

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(*Cruc.* VII). Likewise, the idea that Christ gave his spirit to the Father at the moment he died appears in Ps-Hippolytus (cf. *IP* 55) and Ephrem (*Cruc.* VI.2). For the way Origen inherited his paschal mystery theology from Asia Minor, see the next part of this study.

<sup>7</sup> Pseudo-Hippolytus, *IP* 45.1–7.

<sup>8</sup> *IP* 51.39–40.

<sup>9</sup> *IP* 53.1–4.

Another chapter of the text regards the battle and victory from a new angle, now displaying cosmic resonances:

When the cosmic struggle (ὁ κοσμικὸς ἀγὼν) ended and Christ had struggled victoriously on all sides (πάντα πανταχόθεν διήθλησε νικήσας), neither elevated as God nor vanquished as man, but remaining solidly rooted in the confines of the universe, triumphantly (προπομπεύων καὶ θριαμβεύων) producing on his own person a trophy of victory (τρόπαιον ἐπινίκιον) over the enemy (κατὰ τοῦ ἐχθροῦ), then the world was in amazement at his long endurance; then the heavens leaped with joy; the Powers were moved, the heavenly thrones and laws were moved at seeing the General of the great powers (τὸν ἀρχιστράτηγον τῆς μεγάλης δυνάμεως) hanging on the cross.<sup>10</sup>

The same celestial hosts will contemplate the triumphal return to heaven of their victorious king surrounded by his servant powers and the saved humankind.<sup>11</sup> At the gates of heaven, the powers command the celestial hosts to open the celestial doors for the King of Glory. When the guarding hosts investigate the identity of the king, the powers offer them the following description: “The Lord of powers is the king of glory, strong (ἰσχυρός), mighty (κραταίος), and powerful in war (δυνατὸς ἐν πολέμῳ) (Ps 24/23:8).”<sup>12</sup>

The narrative of Pseudo-Hippolytus’s *IP* concludes with the description of a universal feast, in which the heavens and earth join in a cosmic celebration. The paschal Eucharist, in which Christ offers himself to be sacrificed and consumed, becomes the fulfillment of the human history, in general, and of the divine economy, in particular. In this instance, typological hermeneutics turn into a Eucharistic interpretation, since all Exodus 12 references to the sacrifice and consumption of the lamb denote the paschal sacrifice and Eucharistic celebration of the new community, the Christian ecclesia.

Furthermore, Pseudo-Hippolytus also imagines Christ’s divine dimension as a gigantic and luminous being, invisible for the ordinary eye, and only noetically perceivable. For the author, the month of Pascha is the beginning of time because Christ the Pascha is the first-engendered and firstborn of all noetic and invisible realities (τῶν πάντων νοητῶν τε καὶ ἀοράτων). For this reason, he interprets the night on which the flesh should be eaten (Exod 12) as the fact that the noetic light of Christ is not visible in the Eucharist: “This is *the night* on which the flesh is eaten, for the light of the world (τὸ τοῦ κόσμου

<sup>10</sup> *IP* 55.1–8.

<sup>11</sup> *IP* 61.

<sup>12</sup> *IP* 61.13–16.

φῶς) has set on the great body of Christ (ἐπὶ τῷ μεγάλῳ σώματι τοῦ Χριστοῦ): *Take and eat; this is my body*” (Matt 26:26).<sup>13</sup> In *IP* 27, while commenting on the Exodus 12 expression “flesh roasted with fire,” Pseudo-Hippolytus similarly describes Christ’s spiritual body as possessing a fiery constitution.<sup>14</sup>

These liturgical passages are significant, since they denote unambiguously the noetic and spiritual nature of Christ’s divine body, therefore the noetic nature of the sacrifice and of the consumption of this body. Pseudo-Hippolytus continues by offering new insights in the semiotics of this noetic banquet: eating the head represents the understanding of the Father, the entrails refer to the will of the Father, the feet denote human beings, and several others.<sup>15</sup> Other passages insert advices for taking part in the paschal banquet; namely, personal preparations for consuming the divine food with appropriate reverence, which consist in some ascetical exercises. Eating the Passover in haste refers to the liturgical practice of keeping vigil and fasting before taking communion,<sup>16</sup> while the girded loins denote the abandonment of pleasures and sexuality.<sup>17</sup> Similarly, the expression “[i]n one house shall it be eaten and you shall not carry any of the flesh out from the house (Exod 12:46)” designates the church.<sup>18</sup> Specifically, *IP* 41 informs that the “sacred body of Christ” (τὸ ἱερόν σῶμα τοῦ Χριστοῦ) can be eaten only within the church, because it is a mystery of the Christian ecclesia. The salvific consumption of Christ is placed, therefore, in a liturgical present. Furthermore, this consumption is noetic, or intelligible, while the nature of the food is also noetic.

### 3. ORIGEN OF ALEXANDRIA: CONSUMING NOETICALLY THE NOETIC BODY OF CHRIST

The pattern of the combat myth, instituting the paschal Eucharist as a divine banquet with its own special rituals, reappears in Origen’s *Peri Pascha*. Regarding the Alexandrian’s treatment of the present topic, scholar Harald

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<sup>13</sup> *IP* 26. *IP* 41.3–4 specifically assert that the “sacred body of Christ” (τὸ ἱερόν σῶμα τοῦ Χριστοῦ) can be eaten only within the Church.

<sup>14</sup> *IP* 27.1–2: “The flesh is roasted with fire: for the spiritual body of Christ is on fire (ἐμπυρον γὰρ λογικόν σῶμα τοῦ Χριστοῦ).”

<sup>15</sup> *IP* 29.

<sup>16</sup> *IP* 32.

<sup>17</sup> *IP* 33.

<sup>18</sup> *IP* 41.

Buchinger has already demonstrated the presence of warfare metaphors<sup>19</sup> and the eating of the Pascha as a symbol for the participation in the Logos.<sup>20</sup> An opponent of any idea of divine body—although accepting the spiritual, ethereal, and luminous reality of resurrected bodies—Origen employs an allegorical method in his exegesis of the Bible. Additionally, he develops the theme of the combat myth through mystery terminology. While Christ defeats Death in history, and the banquet becomes a historical event (namely, the consumption of the Eucharistic body and blood), the process of consumption is placed on a present, liturgical, noetic, and ‘mysterious’ level.<sup>21</sup> According to Origen, the *ἱεραὶ γραφαί* render how God commended ancient Israel to fulfill a sacred service (*ἱερουργία*) and a sacred sacrifice (*ἱεροθυσία*) in a mystical, or mysterious, way (*μυστηριωδῶς*).<sup>22</sup> This mystery was a mere shadow of the future sacrifice of the Logos. Following the Asia Minor tradition of Melito of Sardis and possibly Pseudo-Hippolytus, Origen employs the distinction between the old and new mystery series, most possible in the context of the Jewish-Christian polemics of the time, a context undeniably marked by accents of supersessionism. The Logos manifested himself in the old mysteries in the form of types, figures, and parables and accomplished them in the antitypes and the truth of the new mysteries, which are the works of the Logos following his incarnation.

Origen describes the martial actions of the Logos in the second part of the tractate, where he portrays the Son as a Divine Warrior commissioned by his Father to fight “Death,” the “devil,” and the “world ruler” who enslaved humankind. The battle between the Logos, as Divine Warrior, and Death takes place at the time of Christ’s passion, and only this battle and Christ’s victory over Death make possible the banquet of the Pascha. The first consequence of his victorious action is the salvation of the human race:

[A]nd this is what he did at the end of the age when he came to put away sin by his flesh in putting enmity to death (*ἀποκτείνας τὴν ἔχθραν*); and having come he proclaimed the good news to us who are far off and to us who are near, delivering us from the dominion of darkness (*ἐκ τῆς ἐξουσίας τοῦ σκότους*) and establishing his light (*ἐν τῷ φωτὶ αὐτοῦ*) (cf. Eph 2:16–17; Col 1:12–13; 1 Pet 2:9, etc.). ... [T]he Lord who has blunted (*ἀμβλύνας*) the sting of death (1 Cor

<sup>19</sup> Buchinger, *Pascha*, 773–779.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 838–866.

<sup>21</sup> Buchinger analyzes as well the mystery language of the Origenian *Peri Pascha* (*ibid.*, 868–888). He points out as well the strong connection between Origen’s paschal and eucharistic theologies (*ibid.*, 845–867).

<sup>22</sup> Origen, *Pasch.* 39.



15:55) and suppressed its power (τὴν δύναμιν αὐτοῦ καθαιρήσας), giving by his gospel preaching a mean of escape (ὑπερπήδησιν) to the spirits imprisoned in hell (1Pet 3:19; 4:6) ... Since, therefore, the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same nature, that through death he might destroy him who has the power of death (διὰ τοῦ θανάτου καταργήσῃ τὸν τὸ κράτος ἔχοντα τοῦ θανάτου), that is, the devil (τὸν διάβολον), and deliver (ἀπαλλάξῃ) all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong bondage (δουλείας) (Heb 2:13–15). For they were freed (ἀπήλλαξεν) from the servitude of the world ruler (τῆς δουλείας τοῦ κοσμοκράτορος) of this present darkness (Eph 6:12) by the true Lamb who is Christ Jesus.<sup>23</sup>

The text relates that the powers of hell organize a plot against God.<sup>24</sup> However, the Logos, as a Divine Warrior, defeats them and returns victoriously to his realm. This triumphal march is reinterpreted in Origen's Christian adaptation of the combat myth as Christ's ascension to heaven. Thus the Logos

provided them with a means of ascent into heaven by means of His own ascent, after opening the gates and portals [of heaven] by means of His own entrance: Lift up your gates, O princes, and be lifted up, O ancient doors, and the King of glory will enter in (Ps 24/23:7–9). And after this command was heard a second time by the powers (δυνάμεισιν) stationed at the gates, and when they asked who is there, they heard: The Lord strong and mighty in battle (Κύριος κραταῖος καὶ δυνατὸς ἐν πολέμῳ), the Lord of hosts (Κύριος τῶν δυνάμεων), this is the King of glory (Ps 24/23:8–10), for He is the King of the Father's glory (βασιλεὺς δόξης πατρῶας) in which the Father is glorified.<sup>25</sup>

If these elements recall the marks of the Divine Warrior myth, the last feature—the banquet—suggests a Christian adaptation of the myth, in which the Divine Warrior, unlike Marduk or Ba'al, offers himself as a sacrificial victim. Origen places the mystery of Pascha within a Eucharistic context and the whole process of consuming the body and blood of Christ on a noetic level:

It is necessary for us to sacrifice the true lamb (πρόβατον)—if we have been ordained priests (ιερωθῶμεν), or like priests have offered sacrifice—and it is necessary for us to cook and eat its flesh. ... To show that the passover is something spiritual (νοητόν) and not this sensible (αἰσθητόν) passover, he

<sup>23</sup> Pasch. 46.15–49.25.

<sup>24</sup> Pasch. 48.34–35: "For they [the powers of hell] were devising an *evil plot against him* [Jer 11:19]."

<sup>25</sup> Pasch. 48.

himself says: *Unless you eat my flesh and drink my blood, you have no life in you* (John 6:53). Are we then to eat His flesh and drink His blood in a physical manner? But if this is said spiritually, then the passover is spiritual, not physical.<sup>26</sup>

An opponent of anthropomorphism, Origen develops a hermeneutical strategy in which the discourse on the ingestion of Christ's divine body fluctuates between noetic representation and allegory. According to Origen, eating the Pascha denotes an internalized and transforming spiritual process in which the human being may become a new creature, a perfect individual. As in the ancient Greco-Roman mystery religions, the banquet occasions a new birth.<sup>27</sup> The biblical expression "the first of the months (ἀρχὴ μηνῶν)"<sup>28</sup> becomes the necessary inauguration of a "perfect state of life and a perfect love (τελείας δὲ πολιτείας καὶ τελείας ἀγάπης ἐντὸς γενέσθαι δεῖ)." <sup>29</sup> In this new context, "the perfect man has the beginning of another birth (ὁ τέλειος ἕτερος γενέσεως ἀρχὴν ἔχει)."<sup>30</sup>

The new perfect condition is not particularly ethical but rather sacerdotal and mystical, as chapter 13 demonstrates. The ability to sacrifice and consume the lamb, and, in so doing, to come out of the darkness of Egypt entails two distinct paths. The first is "taking Christ," which connotes for Origen hearing and accepting Christ as the Savior. The second represents the cathartic stage of consuming the divine food in an appropriate way. The sacrifice cannot be prepared without overcoming the "five days" between the tenth and fourteenth of Nissan, an image which the Alexandrian interprets as the five senses.<sup>31</sup> Accordingly, the initiation into mystery must follow a preliminary stage of praxis and purification. In addition to these two conditions, the exegete mentions the demand of illumination, that state in which the light of Christ floods the human intellect: "And for our part, unless the perfect, true light (John 1:9) rises over us and we see how it perfectly

<sup>26</sup> *Pasch.* 13. In passage 26, he explains how the flesh, i.e., the Scripture, does not have to be eaten "green" (an expression which denotes literal interpretation) but cooked on the fire of the Holy Spirit (which is the spiritual interpretation of the Bible).

<sup>27</sup> *Pasch.* 3.37–7.14.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Exod. 12:1–2: "The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in Egypt: This month is to be for you the first of the months."

<sup>29</sup> *Pasch.* 4.36–5.1.

<sup>30</sup> *Pasch.* 6.14–16. Origen explains in *Pasch.* 6.29–30 that "the perfect person becomes other than what he was (ὁ τέλειος ἕτερος παρ' ὃ ἦν γενόμενος)," and in *Pasch.* 7.11 that "those who have been made perfect (τοὺς τελειωθέντας)" are no longer the same [old man].

<sup>31</sup> *Pasch.* 18.10–12.

illuminates our guiding intellect (πεφώτισται ἡμῶν τελείως τὸ ἡγεμονικόν), we will not be able to sacrifice and eat the true Lamb.”<sup>32</sup>

Associating the context of the paschal feast with the Eucharistic consumption of the divine body, Origen avows that the eating of the sacred body confers life and protection against the Angel of Death.<sup>33</sup> The passage, therefore, represents more than a simple metaphor. Accordingly, the heavenly life-giving element—the body of Christ—is sacrificed and consumed in a banquet which takes place here, on earth, as a defending ingredient against the agent of death and as a prefiguration of the celestial feast.

#### 4. PSEUDO-CHRYSOSTOM: INGESTING CHRIST’S PASCHAL BODY

Pierre Nautin has already argued that Origen’s paschal text inspired the anonymous writer of three paschal homilies mistakenly ascribed to John Chrysostom.<sup>34</sup> The author—possibly Apollinarius, according to Enrico Cattaneo—incorporates the scenario of salvation within the terminological framework of the combat myth. He also portrays Jesus as a Divine Warrior who fights death and saves humanity.<sup>35</sup> The text deserves our attention particularly because it conceives of the human effort of knowing God as an intelligible meal. Moreover, the paschal banquet represents a pinnacle of this mystagogic effort. As a spiritual master, the author advises that death finds its way into the human being through two special doors: passion (τὸ πάθος) and thought (ὁ λογισμός).<sup>36</sup> The writer envisions the assumption of the “thoughts according to Christ” as an internal transformation, as clothing a garment of wisdom and spirit. This presence of the spirit within the human being produces the climactic change from the mind leaning towards flesh (ὁ σαρκικός νοῦς) to the spiritual mind (ὁ πνευματικός).<sup>37</sup>

<sup>32</sup> *Pasch.* 21.2–7.

<sup>33</sup> *Pasch.* 14.9–10; 14.13. He follows the terminology of the Epistle to the Hebrews 11:28, ὁ δλοθρεύων (“the destroyer”).

<sup>34</sup> *Homélies pascales II: Trois homélies dans la tradition d’Origène*, ed. Pierre Nautin, SC 36 (Paris: Cerf, 2003), 33–41. Nautin deems that the text was produced at the end of the fourth and beginning of the fifth century, before the emergence of Nestorian controversy (ibid., 26–30). Enrico Cattaneo ascribes the homilies to Apollinarius of Laodicea; cf. Cattaneo, *Trois homélies pseudo-chrysostomiennes sur la Pâque comme oeuvre d’Apollinaire de Laodicée: Attribution et étude théologique* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1981).

<sup>35</sup> *Hom.* 2.25.

<sup>36</sup> *Hom.* 2.8.

<sup>37</sup> *Hom.* 2.10.

Following the mystery of anointment, the author specifies the consumption (μετὰ δὲ τὴν χρίσιν ἔστιν ἡ βρώσις) of the “divine body which makes its dwelling in us” (εἰσοικίζουσα τὸ σῶμα τὸ θεῖον εἰς ἡμᾶς).<sup>38</sup> Pseudo-Chrysostom continues by analyzing the spiritual meaning of the elements of the Jewish Passover meal: the fire denotes the zeal, azymes refer to simplicity (ἀπλότης), and bitter herbs symbolize human tribulations (αἱ θλίψεις).<sup>39</sup> The divine body is obviously the Eucharist and Pseudo-Chrysostom cautions that carelessness, lack of good deeds, and pleasure impede the consumption of the divine food (θεῖα τροφή).<sup>40</sup> Another key component of the meal is the Holy Spirit, the spiritual power (πνευματικὴ δύναμις) which is the fire that must cook the flesh of the lamb.<sup>41</sup> Additionally, every participant in the Eucharist needs to prepare himself, or herself, and approach it in a saintly manner (ἀγίως), with an appropriate body (ἐπιτήδειον σῶμα), because he mixes his body with Christ’s body (ἀνάκρασις τοῦ σώματος αὐτοῦ).<sup>42</sup> This fusion with Christ’s body is followed by the union with the Holy Spirit (πρὸς τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον ἀνακίρνωμεθα). The conclusion of this spiritual advance is that participants become copies of Christ (ὁμοιώματα Χριστοῦ).<sup>43</sup>

Similarly, eating the head and feet of the lamb signifies the beginning and the end of Christ’s epiphany. While the beginning denotes the humble coming of the Son in his incarnation as a human being, the end denotes his eschatological and glorious Parousia.<sup>44</sup> Eating the entrails symbolizes the fulfillment of the entire contemplative journey, the contemplation of the Logos in Jesus or the divine beyond his humanity.<sup>45</sup> This type of perception represents a spiritual knowledge (γνώτε πνευματικῶς) and an internal vision (ἐντὸς ὀφθαλμοῦ), a glance beyond the veil of materiality.<sup>46</sup>

In conclusion, Pseudo-Chrysostom regards the consumption of the divine body as a mystical-Eucharistic process including a hermeneutical dimension, an allegorical interpretation of Exodus 12. The initiate is supposed to advance in the contemplation of, and participation in, the spiritual and glorious Christ of the second Parousia.

<sup>38</sup> *Hom.* 2.11.

<sup>39</sup> *Hom.* 2.12.

<sup>40</sup> *Hom.* 2.15–16. The feast is even called εὐχαριστία in *Hom.* 2.17.

<sup>41</sup> *Hom.* 2.16–17.

<sup>42</sup> *Hom.* 2.17–18.

<sup>43</sup> *Hom.* 2.18.

<sup>44</sup> *Hom.* 2.19–21.

<sup>45</sup> *Hom.* 2.21–22.

<sup>46</sup> *Hom.* 2.21–22.

### 5. DIVINE COMBAT AND PRIMEVAL RITUALS IN THE BIBLE AND ANCIENT NEAR EAST

The divine combat formula, which is not a unique archetype or extant text, implies a certain fluidity and evolution in many cultures and versions. In order to attain a better perspective of the innovative contribution of the paschal authors, we need a short introduction to the evolution and ramifications of the divine combat narrative. This introduction will help us significantly in understanding which branch of the myth can be found in Christian materials, and how particularly the paschal writings of Pseudo-Hippolytus, Origen, and Pseudo-Chrysostom reshaped even the New Testament formula of the myth.

The intention of this sub-chapter is not to reproduce the list of the classical occurrences of the combat myth. Rather, this section aims to pinpoint the presence of a specific family resemblance in these texts. Specifically, I will explore the feature of a deep connection between the divine combat and the institution of rituals following the conflict. It is against this background that we will be able to distinguish more clearly the character and novelty of the paschal theorization of the combat myth. Most likely, from the *Lugale* and *Enūma Eliš* through the time of the Christian paschal Eucharist, several combat myth accounts include obvious allusions to specific festivals or rituals associated with the victorious Divine Warrior figure. The narrative of the divine combat, therefore, assumes the role of testifying for the original festival or ritual and plays the role of an institution narrative for ritual practices. It is a founding saga connecting the real history and ritual practices of a certain community to its *historia sacra* and the mythical *illo tempore* of origins.

The story of the Divine Warrior represents the main plot of such classical textual collections of the ancient Semitic and Greek worlds as the Mesopotamian texts of *Lugale* (late third millennium, preserved in Sumerian),<sup>47</sup> the *Anzû Epic* (early second millennium, preserved in Akkadian),<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> The authors of the Oxford translation appreciate that the text emerged “in southern Iraq some 4,000 years ago” (see *The Literature of Ancient Sumer*, ed. and trans. Jeremy Black et al. [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004], xix). For other translations, see e.g., J. van Dijk, *Lugalud me-lam-bi Nir-gal: Le récit épique et didactique des Travaux de Ninurta, du Déluge et de la nouvelle Création* (Leiden: Brill, 1983); Thorkild Jacobsen, *The Harps that Once ...: Sumerian Poetry in Translation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 233–272.

<sup>48</sup> While the Old Babylonian version comes from the early second millennium, the

*Enūma Eliš* (12th century BCE, preserved in Akkadian),<sup>49</sup> the Ugaritic Baal Cycle (14th century BCE, preserved in the Ugaritic texts),<sup>50</sup> the Hurrian Kumarbi Cycle (14th–13th century BCE, preserved in the Hittite texts),<sup>51</sup> and Hesiod's *Theogony* (8th century BCE).<sup>52</sup>

Additionally, the myth comes out in the biblical *Chaoskampf* tradition<sup>53</sup> as well as in Jewish and Christian apocalyptic literature and rabbinic materials.<sup>54</sup> Several scholars have also indicated its occurrence in the writings of the New Testament, particularly in the texts depicting Jesus calming the raging sea (Matt 8:18–27; Mark 4:36–41; Luke 8:22–25), expelling the legion of demons and casting it into the sea (Matt 8:28–34; Mark 5:1–27; Luke 8:27–39), or portraying him as victorious over death, darkness, Satan, and beasts

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Standard Babylonian version seems to date from the first millennium BCE; cf. *Myths from Mesopotamia: Creation, the Flood, Gilgamesh, and Others*, ed. and trans. Stephanie Dalley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 203.

<sup>49</sup> Scholars assume that the text was composed during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar I (1125–1104 BCE); e.g., W.G. Lambert, "The Reign of Nebuchadnezzar I: A Turning Point in the History of Ancient Mesopotamian Religion," in *The Seed of Wisdom: Essays in Honor of T.J. Meek*, ed. W.S. McCullough (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1964), 3–13; Jule Bidmead, *The Akītu Festival: Religious Continuity and Royal Legitimation in Mesopotamia* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2002), 65.

<sup>50</sup> See Mark S. Smith, ed. and trans., *The Ugaritic Baal Cycle* [Leiden: Brill, 1994], 1:xxii: "It was during the first half of the fourteenth century that the extant form of the Baal Cycle, one of the classics of ancient literature, was committed to writing."

<sup>51</sup> See Harry A. Hoffner and Gary M. Beckman, ed., *Hittite Myths. Second Edition Revised and Augmented*, Writings from the Ancient World 2 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998).

<sup>52</sup> See, e.g., Glenn W. Most, *Hesiod: Theogony, Works and Days, Testimonia*, LCL 57 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), xxv. A few modern scholars have investigated the Near Eastern origins of the combat myth in the ancient Greek religious lore; see, for instance, Martin L. West, *The East Face of Helicon: Asiatic Elements in Greek Poetry and Myth* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 276–305 and Carolina López-Ruiz, *When the Gods Were Born: Greek Cosmogonies and the Near East* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), 48–83. While several features from Hesiod's *Theogony* are compared with *Enūma Eliš* or the Baal cycle, the common elements shared with the Hurrian Kumarbi cycle and Philo of Byblos are especially noticeable.

<sup>53</sup> See, e.g., William R. Millar, *Isaiah 24–27 and the Origin of the Apocalyptic* (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1976); Paul D. Hanson, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979); John Day, *God's Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea: Echoes of a Canaanite Myth in the Old Testament* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); Andrew R. Angel, *Chaos and the Son of Man: The Hebrew Chaokampf Tradition in the Period 515 BCE to 200 CE* (London: T&T Clark, 2006).

<sup>54</sup> See, e.g., Richard J. Clifford, *Creation Accounts in the Ancient Near East and the Bible* (Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association, 1994); idem, "The Roots of Apocalypticism in Near Easter Myth," in *The Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism*, ed. John J. Collins; 3 vols. (New York: Continuum, 1998), 1:3–38; Hanson, *The Dawn*; Angel, *Chaos and the Son of Man*; Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Myth and Rabbinic Mythmaking* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

(Rom 5; 1 Cor 15; Col 2; Rev 12–22).<sup>55</sup> Furthermore, Neil Forsyth mentioned a few patristic authors who expressed their ideas by means of divine combat vocabulary.<sup>56</sup> It is, therefore, not much of a surprise that the myth reappears in the earliest extant Christian paschal texts, namely, in Melito, Pseudo-Hippolytus, Origen, and Pseudo-Chrysostom. The theme of the divine combat actually occurs in numerous other paschal writings of the fourth to sixth centuries.<sup>57</sup> However, the particular feature of the texts ascribed to Pseudo-Hippolytus, Origen, and Pseudo-Chrysostom is that they describe the paschal meal as a noetic consumption of Christ's invisible body.

From a methodological perspective, scholars have debated over the connection between the Jewish and Christian *Chaoskampf* motif and the Near Eastern myth of the Divine Warrior. One of the earliest modern inquiries belongs to Herman Gunkel, who argued, "that the Israelite *Chaoskampf* traditions were ultimately dependent on the Babylonian creation account

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<sup>55</sup> E.g., Howard C. Kee, "The Terminology of Mark's Exorcism Stories," *NTS* 14 (1968): 232–246; Adela Y. Collins, *The Combat Myth in the Book of Revelation* (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1976); John P. Heil, *Jesus Walking on the Sea: Meaning and Gospel Functions of Matt 14:22–33, Mark 6:45–52 and John 6:15b–21* (Rome: Biblical Institute, 1981); Foster R. McCurley, *Ancient Myth and Biblical Faith: Scriptural Transformations* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983); Bruce A. Stevens, "Jesus as the Divine Warrior," *ExpTim* 94 (1983): 326–329; idem. "Why Must the Son of Man Suffer? The Divine Warrior in the Gospel of Mark," *BZ* 31 (1987): 101–110; Bernard F. Batto, "The Sleeping God: An Ancient Near Eastern Motif of Divine Sovereignty," *Bib* 68 (1987): 153–177; idem, *Slaying the Dragon: Mythmaking in the Biblical Tradition* (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1992); Martinus C. de Boer, *The Defeat of Death: Apocalyptic Eschatology in 1 Corinthians 15 and Romans 5* (Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1988); Gregory C. Jenks, *The Origins and Early Development of the Antichrist Myth* (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1991), 193–366; Paul B. Duff, "The March of the Divine Warrior and the Advent of the Greco-Roman King: Mark's Account of Jesus' Entry into Jerusalem," *JBL* 111 (1992): 55–71; Tom R. Yoder Neufeld, *Put on the Armour of God: The Divine Warrior from Isaiah to Ephesians* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997); Dominic Rudman, "The Crucifixion as *Chaoskampf*: A New Reading of the Passion Narrative in the Synoptic Gospels," *Bib*. 84 (2003): 102–107; Angel, *Chaos and the Son of Man*, 125–148, where the author investigates the *Chaoskampf* motif in Mark 13:24–27, Luke 21:25–28, Rev 12:1–17, and Rev 13:1–18.

<sup>56</sup> Neil Forsyth, *The Old Enemy: Satan and the Combat Myth* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987): 333–440.

<sup>57</sup> One may see, for instance, Ephrem the Syrian (cf. *Éphrem de Nisibe: Hymnes pascales*, ed. François Cassingena-Trévedy, SC 502 [Paris: Cerf, 2006]: Az. 1.11–13, 4.2; 5; 8; 13, 20.5–10, *Cruc.* 6.6, 7.4, 8.14, *Res.* 1.8, 3.11, 4.2), Chromatius of Aquileia (*Sérmons*, ed. Joseph Lemarié, SC 154; 164 [Paris: Cerf, 1969; 1971], 16.2; 17.1; 2, 19.1; 5; 6), Romanos the Melodist (cf. *Romanos le Mélode: Hymnes*, vol. 4, *Hymns from the Palm Sunday to the Day of Pascha*, ed. José Grosdidier de Matons, SC 128 [Paris: Cerf, 1967]: 36.21, 37.17, 38.1; 3, 39.16, 40. Proem 1; 5; 20, 41. Proem; 13–14; 20, 42.3, 43. Proem; 18; 20–22; 24–26; 31, 44.7, 45. Proem; 4; 7; 9, and the refrains of the hymns 43 and 44), Ps-Chrysostom, *Hom.* 2.25, or Hesychius of Jerusalem (cf. *Homélie pascales: Cinq homélie inédites*, ed. Michel Aubineau, SC 187 [Paris: Cerf, 1972]: *In s. Pascha* 1; 3; 5; 6).

found in *Enūma Eliš*.<sup>58</sup> A number of scholars who succeeded Gunkel—for instance, W.G. Lambert and W.F. Saggs—denied any direct connection between *Enūma Eliš* and the creation account of the book of Genesis. Following a new hypothesis, one based on the 1929 discoveries at Ras Shamra, Yehezkel Kaufmann was the first to argue that the roots of the Israelite *Chaoskampf* tradition should be searched in Canaan, rather than Mesopotamia.<sup>59</sup> Pursuing this line of investigation, some scholars have identified common elements between the creation motifs of the Bible (e.g., Ps 74:12–17 and Job 26) and the earlier Ugaritic texts.<sup>60</sup> As William Whitney attests:

This has been recognized by a number of scholars who argue that the motifs of conflict, kingship, ordering of chaos, fertility, and temple building found in the [Baal] epic represent a concern for the establishment of order and stability at two levels, that of cosmos and that of human society.<sup>61</sup>

I also contend that many of the aforementioned instances of the divine combat narrative include a festival which follows the battle and victory, and delineate a divine institution of the worship of the victorious deity. The post bellum reference to a first festival or primordial rites—which are sometimes presented as the re-installation of the true worship—represents the founding narrative of a ritual observance. Thus, the inauguration of

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<sup>58</sup> K. William Whitney, *Two Strange Beasts: Leviathan and Behemoth in Second Temple and Early Rabbinic Judaism*, HSM 63 (Winona Lake, 2006), 11. Gunkel concludes one of the chapters of his *Schöpfung und Chaos* with the following clear statement: “So ist also unser Resultat: der babylonische Tiāmat-Marduk-Mythus is von Israel übernommen und hier zu einem Jahve-Mythus geworden.” *Schöpfung und Chaos in Urzeit und Endzeit: Eine religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung über Gen 1 and Ap Joh 12* (Göttingen: Vanderhoek & Ruprecht, 1895), 114.

<sup>59</sup> See Yehezkel Kaufmann, *The Religion of Israel from its Beginnings to the Babylonian Exile*, trans. Moshe Greenberg (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), 60–63; Wilfred G. Lambert, “A New Look at the Babylonian Background of Genesis,” *JTS* 16 (1965): 291; H.W.F. Saggs, *The Encounter of the Divine in Mesopotamia and Israel* (London: Athlone Press, 1978), 54–63. See also Loren R. Fisher, “Creation at Ugarit and in the Old Testament,” *VT* 15 (1965): 313–314 for other scholars who defended similar opinions.

<sup>60</sup> See for instance Day, *God's Conflict*, 2–3, 23 and Jon D. Levenson, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil: The Jewish Drama of Divine Omnipotence* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988), 3–13.

<sup>61</sup> Whitney, *Two Strange Beasts*, 14. See also Fisher, “Creation at Ugarit,” 313–334; David L. Petersen and Mark Woodward, “Northwest Semitic Religion: A Study of Relational Structures,” *UF* 9 (1977): 233–248; Richard J. Clifford, “Cosmogonies in the Ugaritic Texts and in the Bible,” *Or* 53 (1984): 183–201; Mark S. Smith, “Interpreting the Baal Cycle,” *UF* 18 (1986): 318–320; Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, 39–43, 120.



the worship of Ninurta, Marduk, Ba'al, (possibly) Zeus, Yahweh, and Christ follows the combat narrative which legitimizes the rite.

The *Lugale*, lines 662–668, already unveils the presence of a primeval festival and rites following the battle story between Ninurta and Asag:

My King: there is a hero who is devoted to you and to your offerings (*sa-dug*), he is as just as his reputation, he walks in your ways; since he has brilliantly accomplished all that is proper for you in your temple (*e*), since he has made your shrine (*eš*) rise from the dust for you, let him do everything magnificently for your festival (*ezen*). Let him accomplish perfectly for you your holy rites (*garza*). He has formulated a vow for his life. May he praise you in the Land.<sup>62</sup>

The pattern “combat-ritual institution” reoccurs in the *Anzû* iii, where the Old Babylonian version in itself mentions monster Anzum (Anzû) taking great pride in suspending “every single rite,” an event indeed perceived in the story as a horrendous offence.<sup>63</sup> A joyous festival with rites takes place, as well, at the end of the conflict between Ningirsu (Ninurta) and Anzû in *Anzû* iii, the standard version: “Come! Let him come to us, Let him rejoice, play, make merry. ... the gods his brothers and hear (their) secrets, ... the secrets of the gods. Let [Enlil (?)], the ... of the gods his brothers bestow on him the rites.”<sup>64</sup> Additionally, the narrative shows Ningirsu establishing a new socio-religious order in the post-war times: “Then shall rites return for the father who begot you! [Then surely shall] shrines be created! Establish your cult centers all [over the four quarters!].”<sup>65</sup> The standard Babylonian version epitomizes the same sequence “combat-institution of worship” in these terms:

Let him (Ellil) in his powerfulness gaze upon wicked Anzu (in Ekur)./ Warrior, in your powerfulness, when you slew the mountain,/ You captured Anzu, slew him in powerfulness,/ Slew soaring Anzu in his powerfulness./ Because you were so brave and slew the mountain,/ You made all foes kneel at the feet of Ellil your father./ Ninurta, because you were so brave and slew the mountain,/ You made all foes kneel at the feet of Ellil your father./ You have won complete dominion, every single rite./ Who was ever created like you? The mountain's rites/ Are proclaimed (?), the shrines of the gods of fates granted to you./ They call upon Nissaba for your purification ceremony;/ They call your name in the furrow NINGIRSU.<sup>66</sup>

<sup>62</sup> See *Ninurta's Exploits or Ninurta Lugal-e* 662–668, in Black, *The Literature of Ancient Sumer*, 178–179.

<sup>63</sup> *Anzu* III, in Dalley, *Myths from Mesopotamia*, 225.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 218.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 226.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 219–220.

We may encounter a similar feature in the *Enūma Eliš*, in which the elements of a feast intertwine with the setting of a shrine (a divine dwelling place with its own ritual customs), following the divine conflict between Marduk and Tiamat:

Bēl seated the gods, his fathers, at the banquet/ In the lofty shrine which they had built for his [Marduk's] dwelling,/ (Saying,) "This is Babylon, your fixed dwelling,/ Take your pleasure here! Sit down in joy!"/ The great gods sat down,/ Beer-mugs were set out and they sat at the banquet./ After they had enjoyed themselves inside/ They held a service in awesome Esagil. The regulations and all the rules were confirmed.<sup>67</sup>

By the same token, in the cycle of Ba'al, it is a matter of worship that actually generates the divine confrontation. The event which triggers the clash between Ba'al and Yam (the Sea god), appears to be Yam's command over the other gods and their disobedience to Ba'al. The result is the cease of worship dedicated to the deity.<sup>68</sup> In this material, too, a banquet marks the end of hostilities, as one sees in the *Baal's Palace*,<sup>69</sup> the text following the narrative of Ba'al's conflict with Yam and his victory over the sea monster:

he [Radaman] put a cup in his [Baal] hands, a goblet in both his hands—a great chalice, mighty to behold, a drinking-vessel of the inhabitants of heaven, a holy cup, which women might not see, a goblet which (even) a wife could not look upon. A thousand measures it took from the winevat, ten thousand (draughts) it took from the barrel. He arose, intoned and sang, the cymbals in the minstrel's hands; he sang, the chorister of beautiful voice, concerning Baal in the uttermost parts of Saphon.<sup>70</sup>

The text of *Baal's Palace* discloses another ritual aspect in the episode regarding the construction of Ba'al's house or palace, which Nick Wyatt identifies with Ba'al's temple.<sup>71</sup> The goddess Anat gives to El two arguments for building Baal's temple-palace. First, the goddess produces a formula in which Wyatt sees "cultic language" reflected from Ba'al's rituals, "we should

<sup>67</sup> *Enūma Eliš*, Tablet 6.70–78. For the English translation, see Wilfred G. Lambert, "Mesopotamian Creation Stories," in *Imagined Creation*, eds. Markham J. Geller and Mineke Schipper, IJS Studies in Judaica 5 (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 17–59, here 53. See also Hanson's comparative analyses in *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*, 300–322, 302.

<sup>68</sup> KTU 1.2, col. i.15–20 and i.35–40, in *Religious Texts from Ugarit: The Words of Ilimilku and His Colleagues*, ed. and trans. Nick Wyatt (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998).

<sup>69</sup> KTU 1.3–1.4, col. i.10–22.

<sup>70</sup> KTU 1.3–1.4, col. i.10–22, Wyatt 70–71. *Baal's Palace* follows immediately after the narrative of Baal's combat with and victory over Yam (KTU 1.1–1.2).

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

all bring his cha[lice], we should all bri[ng] his cup.” The second argument is that Baal does not have a palace or temple like the other gods.<sup>72</sup> Thus, *Baal's Palace* demonstrates once again the existence of a ritual observance in the social context which produced this document and the key role of this observance for the entire cycle.<sup>73</sup>

Some of the biblical *Chaoskampf* texts manifest as well the sequence “combat-ritual institution” alluded to above. A common feature in the composition of the combat myth in the ancient Near East, the theme of the “festival” follows also the battle stories of the Bible. Millar argues for the existence of a certain repeated thematic pattern in the main texts of the *Chaoskampf* tradition: “Threat-War-Victory-Feast.” Millar expressly conjoins this pattern with the myth of the Divine Warrior.<sup>74</sup> Respectively, Isaiah 24–27 reflects this pattern and additionally mentions the sacred mountain of God, the place of his dwelling and, consequently, of his rituals:

On this mountain the Lord of Hosts will prepare a banquet (משמה) of rich fare for all the peoples, a banquet of wine well matured, richest fare and well-matured wines strained clear. On this mountain the Lord will destroy that veil shrouding all the peoples, the pall thrown over all the nations. He will destroy death for ever. Then the Lord God will wipe away the tears from every faces, and throughout the world remove the indignities from his people.<sup>75</sup>

Likewise, the famous Song of the Sea (Exod 15:1b–21) prophesizes about a future sanctuary and a dwelling-place of Yahweh, and it concludes with a sort of festival procession, most likely reflecting liturgical practices at Yahweh's Temple at the time when the document was composed:

“You will bring them in and plant them in the mount that is your possession, the dwelling-place, Lord of your own making (יהוה פעלת יהוה), the sanctuary (מבון), Lord, which your own hands established. The Lord will reign (ימלך) for ever and for ever.” When Pharaoh's horse, both chariots and cavalry, went into the sea (בים), the Lord brought back the waters over them; but Israel had passed through the sea on dry ground. The prophetess Miriam, Aaron's sister, took up her tambourine, and all the women followed her, dancing to the sound of tambourines; and Miriam sang them this refrain: “Sing to the Lord,

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 100.

<sup>73</sup> The story becomes more complex when Ba'al has to fight a second monster bearing the symbolic name Mot (“Death”).

<sup>74</sup> Millar, *Isaiah*, 65–71. See also Hanson, *Dawn*, 305–307, 311–313 and Whitney, *Two Strange Beasts*, 156–161.

<sup>75</sup> Isa 25:6–8. For the Divine Warrior, see Millar, *Isaiah*, 71–82.

for he has risen up in triumph (גאה גאה): horse and rider he has hurled into the sea."<sup>76</sup>

Our short inquiry allows us to conclude that each of the narratives of *Lugale*, the *Anzû Epic*, *Enûma Eliš*, the Ba'al Cycle, and some of the biblical *Chaos-kampf* texts link the divine combat with the institution of worship. That is to say that the divine conflict and the rituals and festivals ascribed to the victorious deity are uniquely connected. Thus, the combat myth represents an etiological narrative binding the social ritual to its transcendent and divine origin. The narrative plays, therefore, an apologetic and explanatory function for the institution and existence of a certain ritual observance which claims divine authority and origin, and involves a multifaceted and intricate social setting for religious, political, economic, and social aspects.<sup>77</sup> Festivals of antiquity, therefore, frequently subsisted as sacrosanct rites and liturgies aimed at joining the sacred and the profane—insofar as liturgical and ritual gestures were frequently expected to entail both divine presence and human participation in the divine. Updating one of Mircea Eliade's insights—according to which ancient religious communities employed their founding narratives in ritual practices in order to connect the sacred and the profane, and enliven the divine powers which created the universe (as the most appropriate agents to rebuild the universe and society)—Benjamin Sommer affirms the following regarding the Mesopotamian *Akītu* festival:

A careful rereading of the ritual instructions published by Thureau-Dangin (which I shall refer to as the "Akītu program") shows that the Babylonian Akītu does exemplify a cosmogonic New Year's festival: through its rites, the Esagila temple, and hence the world, are symbolically razed, purified, and re-created; kingship, and hence cosmic order, are abolished and renewed. Thus the Akītu festival also effects a return to the time of creation, which culminated in the enthronement of Marduk and the construction by the gods of Marduk's temple in Babylon, the Esagila.<sup>78</sup>

<sup>76</sup> Exod 15:17–21. See the parallel Cross draws between the Song of the Sea and Baal cycle in his *Canaanite Myth*, 112–144.

<sup>77</sup> See for example Bidmead's analysis of the *Akītu* festival in her *The Akītu Festival*, 67: "The recounting of the creation epic [i.e., *Enuma Elish*] functions within the rituals of the *akītu* to reconnect the worshiper with primordial power while offering a religious interpretation for the creation and cosmic order of the world, the hierarchy of the deities, and the supremacy of Marduk and his chosen earthly representative."

<sup>78</sup> Sommer, "The Babylonian Akītu Festival: Rectifying the King or Renewing the Cosmos?" *JANES* 27 (2000):81–95, esp. 85. For Eliade, see *Sacred*, 77: "At Babylon during the course of the

## 6. THE METAMORPHOSES OF THE COMBAT MYTH IN JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN CONTEXTS

Turning to the Jewish and Christian contexts, scholars Millar, Hanson, Whitney, Cross, and Day have observed that such biblical *Chaoskampf* materials as Psalms 24; 65; 74; 89; 93; 104 and Job 3; 7; 9; 38; 40 imply a divine combat narrative manifesting the obvious traditional notes of a conflict between Yahweh and a chaos monster. Nonetheless, Day identifies three new categories of biblical *Chaoskampf* materials which modify the classical schema of a conflagration with a primeval monster. The texts belonging to the first category simply express Yahweh's sovereign lordship over creation. In the account of Genesis, for example, the narrative depersonalizes the waters and demythologizes the combat myth by reducing Yahweh's contact with the waters from combat to providence, to his cosmic control, or management, of the elements of the universe.<sup>79</sup>

The second category, according to Day, places the mythical event in the real history of humanity. The texts belonging to this group transfer the combat from the primordial times to the history of Israel. They depict Yahweh as a Divine Warrior fighting the enemies of his people and saving his community.<sup>80</sup>

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*akitu* ceremony, which was performed during the last days of the year that was ending and the first of the New Year, the *Poem of Creation*, the *Enuma elish*, was solemnly recited. This ritual recitation reactualized the combat between Marduk and the marine monster Tiamat, a combat that took place *ab origine* and put an end to chaos by the final victory of the god. ... That this commemoration of the Creation was in fact a *reactualization* of the cosmogonic act is shown both by the rituals and in the formulas recited during the ceremony. The combat between Tiamat and Marduk, that is, was mimed by a battle between two groups of actors, a ceremonial that we find again among the Hittites (again in the frame of the dramatic scenario of the New Year), among the Egyptians, and at Ras Shamra. The battle between two groups of actors *repeated the passage from chaos to cosmos*, actualized the cosmogony." Cf. idem, *The Myth of the Eternal Return*, trans. Willard R. Trask (New York: Pantheon Books, 1954).

<sup>79</sup> See Day, *God's Conflict*, 18–49 for Yahweh's fight with the chaos (e.g. Pss 24; 65; 74; 89; 93; 104; Job 3:8; 7:12; 9:5–14; 38:8–11), and *ibid.*, 49–61 for the change of the combat into a control of the cosmic waters and the depersonalization of the waters (e.g., Gen 1:2; 6–10; 26; Ps 33:7–8; Prov 8:24; 27–29; Jer 5:22; 31:35); see *ibid.*, 57–61 for the victory over sea as Yahweh's lordship over creation (Ps 29; Nah 1:4).

<sup>80</sup> See Day, *God's Conflict*, 88–140. Day observes that, while such biblical texts as those mentioned in the previous note preserve the combat in connection with the primordial times, other texts such as Exod 15, Isa 8; 17; 27; 30; 51, Jer 51; Ezek 29; 32, Hab 3, Pss 18; 44; 46; 68; 87 conceive of the combat as Yahweh's fight with the enemies of Israel. See also Artur Weiser, *Glaube und Geschichte im Alten Testament* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1931), 22–43 and Martin Noth, *Gesammelte Studien zum Alten Testament*, ed. Hans W. Wolff (Munich: C. Kaiser, 1969), 2:29–47.

The third category offered here initiates a new avenue, transferring the combat myth from the primeval times to the eschaton, or to eternity, as Herman Gunkel earlier noticed.<sup>81</sup> This new paradigm emerges in several materials including Isaiah 24–27, some apocalyptic literature, and various rabbinic writings.<sup>82</sup> The transfer to the eschaton implies a key consequence regarding the institution of rituals. Instead of ritual institution—which has to secure the connection between humanity and the divine during the course of history—the final combat will bring the heavenly bliss of eternity. One may count, as belonging to this category, such texts as Isaiah 24–27, Daniel 7, Qumran texts, *1 Enoch* 60, Mark 13:24–27, Luke 21:25–28, Rev 12:1–17, 13:1–18, *4 Ezra* 6:47–52, *2 Bar.* 29:3–4, and some rabbinic writings.<sup>83</sup> The two new

<sup>81</sup> Gunkel, *Schöpfung und Chaos*, 30–40. Compare with the English translation, *Creation and Chaos in the Primeval Era and the Eschaton: A Religio-Historical Study of Genesis 1 and Revelation 12*, trans. K. William Whitney Jr. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006), 231–234. See as well Day's analysis of such texts as Isa 24–27 and Dan 7 (Day, *God's Conflict*, 141–178).

<sup>82</sup> Day already describes Isa 25:6–8 as the “first reference” to an “eschatological banquet in Judaism” (Day, *God's Conflict*, 142–151, esp. 150); cf. Catherine L. Nakamura, *Monarch, Mountain, and Meal: The Eschatological Banquet of Isaiah 24:21–23; 25:6–10a* (PhD diss., Princeton Theological Seminary, 1992), 209. Peter-Ben Smit, in his extensive study on the varieties of foods and banquets of the kingdom, qualifies Isa 25:6–8 as an eschatological celebratory banquet. Moreover, “Isa. 25:6–8 is the only certain and therefore also the parade example of an eschatological banquet in the HB/OT. As a victory banquet, it is part of the myth of the divine warrior.” (Peter-Ben Smit, *Fellowship and Food in the Kingdom: Eschatological Meals and Scenes of Utopian Abundance in the New Testament* [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008], 22).

<sup>83</sup> E.g.: “Rabbah said R. Yohanan said, ‘The Holy One, blessed be He, is destined to make a banquet for the righteous out of the meat of Leviathan: ‘Companions (*hbrym*) will make a banquet (*ykrw*) of it’ (Job 40:30). The meaning of ‘banquet’ derives from the usage of the same word in the verse, ‘And he prepared (*wykrh*) for them a great banquet (*krh*) and they ate and drank’ (2 Kgs 6:23). ‘Companions’ can refer only to disciples of sages, in line with this usage: ‘You that dwell in the gardens, the companions hearken for your voice, cause me to hear it’ (Song 8:13). The rest of the creature will be cut up and sold in the markets of Jerusalem: ‘They will part him among the Canaanites’ (Job 40:30), and ‘Canaanites’ must be merchants, in line with this usage: ‘As for the Canaanite, the balances of deceit are in his hand, he loves to oppress’ (Hos 12:8). If you prefer: ‘Whose merchants are princes, whose traffickers are the honorable of the earth’ (Isa 23:8).” (*b. B. Bat.* 4.4.28a–b[74b–75a], in *The Talmud of Babylonia: An Academic Commentary*, ed. and trans. Jacob Neusner, vol. 12, *Bavli Tractate Baba Batra*, part A [Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1996], 223). A similar perspective of the eschatological banquet appears in *Pesiq. Rab. Kah.*, supplement 2 and describes how R. Nahman, R. Hona the priest, and R. Judah the Levite b. R. Shallum engaged in a discussion about the participants at the feast, and the classes of participants they proposed are as follows: pilgrims, masters of Scripture, masters of Mishnah, masters of Talmud, masters of Haggadah, masters of Miswôt, masters of Good Deeds, and merchants. See also *Pesiq. Rab.* 16 for R. Joshua b. Levi, *Num. Rab.* 21:18 for R. Yohanan, or *Lev. Rab.* 22:10 for Resh Laqish; cf. *Midr. Lev. Rab.* 13:3 All these rabbinic documents span from the fifth to the eighth century CE (see e.g., Whitney, *Two Strange Beasts*, 139–140). Other remarkable instances introduce a new character, the gigantic bird Ziz;

elements added to the general “combat-festival” pattern, as William K. Whitney showed in his study, are actually specific to the third category. Of particular concern to Whitney’s study are the names of the monsters Behemoth and Leviathan and their consumption at the eschatological feast.<sup>84</sup> In the discussion concerning this third category, we must include Andrew R. Angel’s observation according to which the emergence of the Son of Man concept produces the transfer of the martial and salvific functions to this new Divine Warrior, the Son of Man. As a Divine Warrior prince, the new character comes riding the clouds and saving the people of the Ancient of Days.<sup>85</sup>

We may conclude that the Christian paschal narrative was developed within the confines of the second category, in which Christ’s combat and victory take place in history, somewhere between the *Urzeit* and *Endzeit*.<sup>86</sup> The combat and victory elements create an institution narrative—which includes the Last Supper—for the paschal Eucharist envisioned as a sacred festival and banquet. The translation of the banquet from the level of the divine (as it can be found in *Lugale*, the *Anzû Epic*, *Enūma Eliš*, and the Ba’al cycle, where the banquet represents a gods’ party) to the level of humankind is already present in Isa 25:6–8 and later reappears in both Christian paschal writings and rabbinic materials.<sup>87</sup>

As I have already mentioned above, some of the early paschal texts proposed two new key elements, both articulated within the limits of the

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e.g., *Midr. Pss.* 23:7, *Nistārôt* 3, in *Bêt ha-Midrash* 3; L. Ginzberg, ed., *The Legends of the Jews*, trans. Henrietta Szold (Philadelphia: JPS, 1928), 5:44–45. For scholarship on this topic, see also Michael A. Fishbane, “Rabbinic Mythmaking and Tradition: The Great Dragon Drama in b Baba Batra 74b–75a,” in *Tehillah le-Moshe: Biblical and Judaic Studies in Honor of Moshe Greenberg*, ed. Mordechai Cogan et al. (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1997), 273–283; idem, “The Great Dragon Battle and the Talmudic Redaction,” in M.A. Fishbane, *The Exegetical Imagination: On Jewish Thought and Theology* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 41–55; Joseph Gutmann, “Leviathan, Behemoth and Ziz: Jewish Messianic Symbols in Art,” *HUCA* 39 (1968): 219–230.

<sup>84</sup> Whitney, *Two Strange Beasts*, 169.

<sup>85</sup> Angel, *Chaos and the Son of Man*.

<sup>86</sup> The paradigm is a little bit more complex, since it reflects as well some echoes of the first category. In terms of time, although Christ’s battle with Death takes place in time and history, the victory of resurrection established an *ab initio* moment when the true ritual was instituted and a “new world” commenced.

<sup>87</sup> Whitney also noticed this change at the level of the economy of salvation: while Ninurta and Marduk saved the gods, Yahweh saves his people: “The implication is that the people of God ... are the recipients of divine salvation. The language of v. 5 [i.e., Ps 24:5] confirm this and the appearance of a ‘Salvation of God’s people’ motif in a number of similar contexts (e.g., Pss 46:8; 68:9–10; 22–23; Isa 43:20–21) points to a particularly Israelite historicization of the events of salvation.” (*Two Strange Beasts*, 160).

second category of the combat myth. The first of these elements emphasizes the noetic nature of the feast, insofar as the paschal liturgy represents a post-combat ritual moment incorporating, in its core, a noetic, invisible, and mystery banquet. Likewise, the Divine Warrior himself turns into a noetic reality. The second element I posit consists in the self-offering dimension of the Divine Warrior—now the Victor-Christ—who changes into the sacrificed victim and the sacred food of the noetic feast.

#### 7. THE DIVINE WARRIOR MYTH IN THE HALLEL PSALMS AND PSALM 24

The channels of transmission of the divine combat formula to the early Christian literature represent both an enthralling and complex question. We may assume that it was the Hebrew Bible (especially used in its Greek translation, the Septuagint) and the liturgical texts (most of them biblical) that conveyed the myth to the Christian setting. The Divine Warrior myth was also part of the Jewish Passover scenario, dating back to some of its most ancient and detectable forms. Tryggve Mettinger observes that the central narrative of the ancient Jewish Passover focused on Yahweh's victory:<sup>88</sup>

The era of Josiah and the subsequent Exile entailed four important consequences on the theological plane: 1. The center of gravity of the liturgical year became the Passover meal, that is, a festival which had obvious historical reference thanks to its new connection with the Exodus. 2. The Chaos battle, which originally depicted a primeval conflict, began to be used to describe God's salvific intervention during the Exodus.<sup>89</sup>

The Passover feast in itself may represent the celebration of Yahweh's enthronement as a king victorious over his enemies and, at the same time, the master of creation. This latter feature will also become a central category of the Christian Pascha.<sup>90</sup> The Jewish Passover narrative employed the second category of the combat myth: the historical one. The Christian Pascha inherited the same category and adapted it to its own ontology.

Since the combat myth appears in all paschal homilies which I have investigated as well as other texts of early paschal literature, for instance, the Syriac one, one may assume the existence of an early liturgical tradition

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<sup>88</sup> Mettinger, *Dethronement*, 67–79.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 76.

<sup>90</sup> Christ is portrayed as the Lord of creation in Pseudo-Hippolytus, *IP* 55.



subsisting as the common background which nurtured all these liturgical materials regarding the paschal feast. The psalms, lessons, and hymns chanted or read at the feast most likely constituted a key medium of conveyance of the myth of the Divine Warrior from the Passover feast of the Second Temple times to the early Christian paschal celebrations. It is plausible that such liturgical hymns as the Hallel psalms—apparently used without disruption during the Jewish Passover celebration and mentioned in the earliest Christian documents—represent one of the main elements of continuity which channelled the combat myth.<sup>91</sup> The Gospels passages of Matt 26:30 and Mark 14:26 both link the Hallel psalms with the feast of Passover as well as Christ's passion and, moreover, show that Jesus sings them for the feast with his apostles: "And having sung the Hallel they left unto the Mount of Olives."

It is very likely that the Hallel psalms remained a steady element of the Christian Pascha from those apostolic times to the Byzantine period. Niek A. Schumann's examination of both the *Diary of a Pilgrimage* of Egeria and the *Armenian Lectionary of Jerusalem* confirms that Christians used various psalms at the paschal celebrations in Jerusalem in the fourth-fifth century. These psalms were used in ceremonial settings during the week from the Palm Sunday to the Paschal Vigil as well as for the entirety of the Paschal Week (i.e., the week after the Pascha).<sup>92</sup> Likewise, Schumann argues that

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<sup>91</sup> For their use in the Passover celebration, see *m. Pesah.* 9.3; 10.6.7; *t. Sukkah* 3.2; *y. Sukkah* 4.8.54c; *b. Ta'an.* 28a; *Mass. Sop.* 20.7. For scholarship on the Hallel psalms and their connection with the Passover celebration, see e.g., Louis Finkelstein, "The Origin of the Hallel," *HUCA* 23, no. 2 (1950–1951): 319–337; T.F. Torrance, "First of the Hallel Psalms," *EvQ* 27 (1955): 36–41; idem., "Last of the Hallel Psalms," *EvQ* 28 (1956): 101–108; Solomon Zeitlin, "Hallel: A Historical Study of the Canonization of the Hebrew Liturgy," *JQR* 53, no. 1 (1962): 22–29; Samuel T. Lachs, "Midrash Hallel and Merkabah Mysticism," in *Gratz College Anniversary Volume: On the Occasion of the 75th Anniversary of the Founding of the College 1895–1970*, ed. Isidore D. Passow and Samuel T. Lachs (Philadelphia: Gratz College, 1971), 193–203; Christopher Bryan, "Shall We Sing Hallel in the Days of the Messiah: A Glance at John 2:1–3:21," *SLJT* 29, no. 1 (1985): 25–36; Gert T.M. Prinsloo, "Unit delimitation in the Egyptian Hallel (Psalms 113–118): An Evaluation of Different Traditions," in *Unit Delimitation in Biblical Hebrew and Northwest Semitic Literature*, ed. Marjo C.A. Korpel and Joseph M. Oesch (Assen, The Netherlands: Van Gorcum, 2003), 232–263.

<sup>92</sup> The *Armenian Lectionary* was edited most likely between 417 and 439; cf. Athanase Renoux, *Le Codex Arménien Jérusalem 121*, PO 35/1; 36/2 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1969–1970), 181. See John Wilkinson, ed. and trans., *Egeria's Travels* (Warminster, UK: Aris & Phillips, 1999), 184–188. See Renoux, *Le codex Arménien*, 119–187 (Pss: 6; 15; 65; 41; 55; 23; 59; 88; 78; 109; 35; 22; 69; 113; 30; 148; 21; 99; 98; 93; 118; 150). Cf. Niek A. Schumann, "Paschal Liturgy and Psalmody in Jerusalem 380–384: Some Observations and Implications," in *Psalms and Liturgy*, ed. Dirk J. Human and Cas J.A. Vos (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 140–154. Egeria's travel seems to have taken place between 381–384 (Wilkinson, *Egeria's Travels*, 169–171).

especially Psalms 65 (read in connection with 1 Cor 15:1–11) and 30 (read with Matt 28:1–20 and John 19:38–20:18) were used at the Paschal Vigil along with Psalms 113 and 118 (the first and last of the so-called Egyptian Hallel).<sup>93</sup>

The presentation thus far proves the existence of a strong liturgical tradition in which the Hallel psalms played a main role in the long history of the Pesach and Pascha feasts. Related to these observations, it is significant to note that the glorification of Yahweh as Savior and Divine Warrior is present everywhere in the Hallel psalms. All the elements of the myth (e.g., combat, salvation, and glorification) come out, for instance, in Psalm 118:10–26:

The nations all surrounded me (כל־גוים סבבוני), but in the Lord's name I drove them off (אמילם). They surrounded me on every side, but in the Lord's name I drove them off. They swarmed round me like bees; they attacked (דעכו) me, as fire attacks brushwood, but in the Lord's name I drove them off. They thrust hard against me so that I nearly fell, but the Lord came to my help. The Lord is my refuge and defense, and he has become my deliverer (ישועה). Listen! Shouts of triumph in the camp of the victors: 'With his right hand the Lord does mighty deeds (עשה חיל); the right hand of the Lord raises up, with his right hand the Lord does mighty deeds.' I shall not die; I shall live to proclaim what the Lord has done. The Lord did indeed chasten me, but he did not surrender me to death. Open to me the gates of victory (שערי־צדק); I shall go in by them and praise the Lord. This is the gate of the Lord; the victors will enter through it. I shall praise you, for you have answered me and have become my deliverer (ישועה). The stone which the builders rejected has become the main corner-stone. This is the Lord's doing; it is wonderful in our eyes. This is the day on which the Lord has acted, a day for us to exult and rejoice. Lord, deliver us, we pray; Lord, grant us prosperity. Blessed is he who enters in the name of the Lord; we bless you from the house of the Lord (מבית יהוה). The Lord is God; he has given us light. Link the pilgrims with cords as far as the horns of the altar. You are my God and I shall praise you; my God, I shall exult you. It is good to give thanks to the Lord, for his love endures for ever.

Although not part of the Hallel group, Psalm 24 (23 in LXX) is an excellent illustration of the *Chaoskampf* myth.<sup>94</sup> Reflecting Yahweh's triumphal return

<sup>93</sup> Schumann concludes in his "Paschal Liturgy," 151: "We know that in Jewish tradition the same group of psalms has been linked with the Pesach as well as with the feast of Leaves. In the light of everything, it seems to be a very interesting datum that the Armenian Lectionary of Jerusalem just relates these 'corner-psalms' of the 'Hallel' with the celebration of the Paschal Vigil."

<sup>94</sup> See, for instance, Mettinger, *Dethronement*, 70–71; Day, *God's Conflict*, 38–38. Martin Brenner finds tight connections between the Song of the Sea, Psalm 118, and Ps 24[23]:7–10 in terms of royal and martial terminologies used to describe Yahweh, his fight, triumphal entrance into the sanctuary, and the final glorification as well as in terms of responsorial

after his victory in battle (the text mentions Yhwh by name), the psalm will be emblematic for both Pseudo-Hippolytus (*IP* 46 and 61) and Origen (*Pasch.* 48). The two authors will see in this psalm Christ's triumphal return to heaven:

Lift up the gates, you chieftains (ראשיכם), lift up the everlasting doors, that the king of glory (מלך הכבוד) may come in. Who is this king of glory? The Lord strong and mighty (יהוה עוז וגבור), the Lord mighty in battle (יהוה מלחמה). Lift up the gates, you chieftains, lift up the everlasting doors, that the king of glory may come in. Who is he, this king of glory? The Lord of Hosts (יהוה צבאות), he is the king of glory.<sup>95</sup>

## 8. CONCLUSION

As this study has explored in detail thus far, the paschal narrative elaborates a new version of the ancestral combat myth formula. The earliest paschal materials—ascribed to Melito of Sardis, Pseudo-Hippolytus, Origen, and Pseudo-Chrysostom [possibly Apollinarius of Laodicea]—reveal a paschal saga of salvation displaying a new version of the narrative formula of the divine combat which implies new and intricate discursive aspects. A significant facet of this exploration regards the source(s) from which this myth was developed; Christian authors most likely inherited the combat myth formula of the ancient Near East (Mesopotamia and Canaan) in several refashioned versions. These versions were most likely developed via two major avenues: the Hebrew Bible and the symbolisms of the ritual life of the Second Temple. Furthermore, as I have argued, the discovery of the many versions of this formula, with all their similarities and dissimilarities, offers a spectacular view on its history and the fascinating parallel elaborations of this imagery.

John Day has previously argued that Jewish biblical tradition transformed the combat myth narrative in three distinct ways: the first retains the divine

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or antiphonal structure, facts that make him to presuppose a common "origin from within the cult of the post-exile;" see Brenner, *The Song of the Sea: Exodus 15:1–21*, BZAW 195 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1991), 67–78, 73.

<sup>95</sup> Ps 24:7–10. Pseudo-Hippolytus and Origen used Ps 24/23:7 in its LXX version: "Lift up the gates you, princes, lift up the everlasting doors (ἄρατε πύλας, οἱ ἄρχοντες ὑμῶν, καὶ ἐπάραθητε, πύλαι αἰώνιοι)." Two other classical early Christian authors—Justin and Irenaeus—have the same form of the verse 7 and the same interpretation connected with Jesus' ascension; see Justin, *1 Apol.* 51, and Irenaeus, *Epid.* 84.

combat in primordial times and demythologizes it into Yahweh's control over the cosmic waters; the second historicizes the combat and envisions Yahweh fighting Israel's historical enemies; and the third transfers the combat to the end of times. The Christian paschal narrative takes over the historicized version of the myth from the Jewish Passover account and refashions it in new lines. In this instance, the Divine Warrior fights Death, saves humankind from slavery, and offers himself to be sacrificed. The salvific manifestation of the Logos in history and creation (his economy of salvation) becomes a martial campaign, while the resurrection denotes his victory over Death. Additionally, Pseudo-Hippolytus, Origen, and Pseudo-Chrysostom transfer the nature of the Divine Warrior, the combat, and the festive consumption of the victim on the noetic level of reality. Although the Divine Warrior's combat with Death takes place in history, between the *Urzeit* and the *Endzeit*, the triumph over Death is also conceived as a new beginning and a new creation, but this time a spiritual or noetic *creatio*.

This chapter has pointed out as well that most of the textual instances of the combat myth (*Lugale*, the *Anzû Epic*, *Enûma Eliš*, the Ba'al Cycle, the *Chaoskampf* materials of the Bible, and the early paschal texts) share a particular family resemblance: a festival or ritual following the divine combat. In some cases, this sequence sheds new light on the entire narrative, now being envisioned as a founding history of the worship for the victorious deity. The narrative links the ritual to the original divine exploits, the *magnalia Dei*, while the rite strives to enliven the divine powers which defeated the evil and organized the world. In the Christian paschal narrative, the victory represents the privileged moment of resurrection—with the episode of the Last Supper included—a moment instituting the rites of the paschal celebration. The summit of its intricate practices is the Eucharistic communion, an ingestion of Jesus' sacrosanct flesh and blood associated with a noetic consumption of the Logos, who plays the role of the Divine Warrior offering himself to be sacrificed and consumed. While the festival represents a historical-liturgical event, it includes simultaneously a prefiguration and inauguration of the eschaton. Thus, the authors envision participation in the paschal rituals as a saving and deifying experience, in which the human being may co-celebrate with the angels and endeavour to be transformed, as far as possible, into a similar condition.



## SUMMARY OF PART TWO

This part of the study has investigated several divine names or images of the main character of the paschal narrative, Jesus Christ, as offered in the pre-Nicene paschal materials, and the divine functions associated with these names. These early liturgical documents portray Jesus as the Logos and the Divine Glory which saves humanity through its manifestation, in the manner the Hebrew Bible describes Yahweh saving his people through the manifestation of his divine glory. Christ is also the High Priest and the Lord of Glory or of the heavenly powers who celebrate the divine service in his luminous presence. The pre-Nicene paschal writings include as well a liturgical soteriology in which human salvation is envisioned as co-celebration with the angels in front of Jesus' heavenly glory.

Jesus is also portrayed as the Divine Image and Heavenly Anthropos who saves humankind (i.e., the image of God) from the prison of Death—as seen in the *eikonic* soteriology of liberation we found in Melito and Pseudo-Hippolytus. Likewise, he is the Divine Image and the Demiurge able to recreate humanity according to his glorious Image—as in the *eikonic* soteriology of re-creation we discovered in Methodius and Tertullian. In this case, Christ the Image is, additionally, Savior and Demiurge. Furthermore, Jesus is the Anthropos figure who maintains the universe and the Anthropos with whom the mystics aspire to identify, while others long for consuming noetically his noetic body. Finally, Christ is the Divine Warrior who fights Death, saves humanity, and offers a paschal Eucharistic feast. In this celebration, he offers himself as sacrificial victim to be consumed in an intellectual or noetic manner.



PART THREE

PASCHAL HERMENEUTICS AND PASCHAL EPISTEMOLOGIES





## INTRODUCTION TO PART THREE

The third part of this study will be preeminently hermeneutical and epistemological in its exploration of the pre-Nicene paschal theology. Thus far, one has seen that the central text of Pesach and early paschal speculations was Exodus 12, a biblical passage perceived as a theophanic report, since it includes the words of God towards humanity. Accordingly, ancient authors supposed that those divine words encompass more than their historical narrative. It is because of this presupposition that Philo read the text allegorically, and early Christian authors interpreted it typologically. Ancient writers, therefore—both Jews and Christians—perceived it as a sacred text: a *hieros logos*. Because of this perception, the interpretation of this text had to be also special, and these ancient authors pondered that it should consist of an intellectual journey going beyond the text, back towards its divine source. In doing so, this allows one to discover the divine and heavenly mysteries concerning God's nature and his providence, therefore his plans regarding the history and destiny of humanity.

My research offered here will unveil three particular epistemic methods strongly connected with three correlative hermeneutical methodologies. The first of these methods will illustrate the fact that paschal exegesis was not a mere intellectual game but a spiritual and existential enterprise. That is to say that this type of exegesis was conceived as part of a mystery initiation, where the initiate had to discover the historical manifestations of the Logos and, in this way, to encounter the Logos himself.

The second hermeneutic method will evince that typology was a method of deciphering the intricate words of the Bible—especially those implying a double meaning, such as parables and theophanic reports—and, thus, the complex semantic net of the sacred text. Hermeneutics, in this case, become of process of discovering the mysteries of God's nature and actions in history, therefore those mysteries concerning the providence and human salvation.

The third and final epistemic method is implied by an ontological presupposition shared by all these Christian sources. Specifically, this method assumes the descent of the divine *kabod*, identified with Christ, as we have already seen in the first part of this work. Thus, the *kabod* was supposed to be present everywhere on earth in a spiritual, invisible, and noetic (intelligible) way. The epistemic implication is that the visionary does not need

ascension to heaven to access the divine *kabod* but a new epistemic capacity in order to cross into the invisible world. This new epistemic capacity is the intelligible or noetic perception: the intuition.

These epistemic theories display both apocalyptic and mystery terminological categories, a situation which allows us to conclude that these documents reflect a late antique theoretical paradigm synthesizing apocalypticism and mystery idioms. This part will try to discern some of the intricate terms, concepts, ideas, images, and symbols which constitute the interwoven fabric of this synthesis. The distinction between the visible and the invisible is superimposed on the apocalyptic ontology, while initiation and intelligible perception become the preeminent ways of accessing the hidden realm.

In this new epistemological context, the Pascha becomes a mystery rite which might be accomplished with an apocalyptic vision, while the paschal discourse evolves into a theology employing such terms as “noetic,” “invisible,” “mystery,” “pneumatic,” and “immaterial.”

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### THE HERMENEUTICS OF A THEOPHANIC REPORT—EXODUS 12: PASCHAL EXEGESIS AS MYSTERY PERFORMANCE

This chapter explores the ways in which paschal writers approached the reading of Scripture within, or in connection with, the liturgical context of the paschal feast. This hermeneutical practice was a spiritual exegesis expressed through mystery terminology and placed within a liturgical context understood as a mystery rite. Within that liturgical context, the exegetical practice was primarily a mystagogic performance, similar to those of the Greek mysteries. This stands opposed to an understanding of hermeneutics as being merely an intellectual endeavor.<sup>1</sup> According to the paschal writings of Melito, Pseudo-Hippolytus, and Origen, scriptural hermeneutics does not imply the mere solving of an enigma, but rather constitutes an actual participation in, or encounter with, a reality imperceptible to the senses; that is, the manifestation of the Logos-Christ. Correspondingly, through the course of the production and culminating at its conclusion, the exegetic performance offers the exegete the opportunity to be more than a mere collector of new information. Instead, just as the ancient Greek used to become the subject of an actual meeting with the manifestations of a god or goddess in the mystery cults, the ancient Christian became the participant in a transforming encounter, mediated by scripture, with the various manifestations of the Logos-Christ. Most likely, this kind of exegesis was the reflection of a Christian polemical attitude towards mystery religions.

Cumulative evidence will lead us to the hypothesis that this type of mystery exegesis was connected with, or part of, the complex liturgical feast of Pascha, most likely emerging in second-century Asia Minor. Melito was the first witness to, if not the inventor of, this way of reading Scriptures. Subsequently, Pseudo-Hippolytus and Origen inherited it from their predecessors and further developed it.

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<sup>1</sup> Putting it into Aristotle's words, it was a matter of *pathein* rather than *mathein*, of "experiencing" rather than "learning" (*Fr.* 15 from Synesius, *Dion* 48, in Nicola Turchi, *Fontes Historiae Mysteriorum Aevi Hellenistici* [Rome: Libreria di scienze e lettere del G. Bardi, 1930]). Cf. Plutarch, *Isis* 382de, and Clement, *Str.* 5.71.1.

## 1. JEWISH PRECEDENTS OF EXEGESIS AS MYSTERY RITE

The Jewish conception of reading the Torah as an experience that leads to the knowledge of divine mysteries served as a precedent for early Christian mystery exegesis.<sup>2</sup> Although various Jewish Diaspora writers such as Aristobulus, Artapanus, the *Orphica* author, Pseudo-Phocylides, and Josephus employed the terminology of the pagan rites, it was mainly Philo who linked the exegetical practice as religious experience with mystery terminology and Greek techniques of allegorical interpretation.<sup>3</sup> For example, in *De cherubim* 42–43, one may encounter the early roots of interpreting Scripture as a mystery rite.<sup>4</sup> The Alexandrian author, as an initiated mystagogue, develops his hermeneutic exercise as a mystery performance (sometimes understood as a sheer metaphor) and invites the reader to take part in this exercise in order to become an initiate in the divine knowledge. Additionally, Philo develops an allegorical exegesis in connection with the Passover narrative in his commentary on Exodus.

In their turn, Melito, Pseudo-Hippolytus, and Origen combined the method of reading Scripture as a religious experience with Christian typological interpretation, Greek mystery terminology, and Jewish terms

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<sup>2</sup> For a more comprehensive perspective on the discussion of Jewish mysteries, see, e.g., Günther Bornkamm, “Μυστήριον κτλ,” *TWNT* 4 (1942): 809–834; Raymond E. Brown, “Pre-Christian Semitic Concept of Mystery,” *CBQ* 20 (1958): 417–443; Erwin R. Goodenough, *By Light, Light: The Mystic Gospel of Hellenistic Judaism* (Amsterdam: Philo Press, 1969); Arthur D. Nock, “The Question of Jewish Mysteries,” in *Essays on Religion and the Ancient World I*, eds. Arthur D. Nock and Zeph Stewart (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1972), 459–468; Anthony E. Harvey, “The Use of Mystery Language in the Bible,” *JTS* 31 (1980): 320–336; Jeffrey Niehaus, “Raz-pesar in Isaiah 24,” *VT* 31 (1981): 376–378; Kelvin G. Friebe, “Biblical Interpretation in the Pesharim of the Qumran Community,” *HS* 22 (1981): 13–24; Guy Couturier, “La vision du conseil divin: Étude d’une forme commune au prophétisme et à l’apocalyptique,” *ScEs* 36 (1984): 5–43; Markus N.A. Bockmuehl, *Revelation and Mystery in Ancient Judaism and Pauline Christianity*, *WUNT* 2/36 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1990); Daniel J. Harrington, “The Raz nihyeh in a Qumran Wisdom Text (1Q26, 4Q415–418, 423),” *RevQ* 17 (1996): 549–553; Torleif Elgvin, “The Mystery to Come: Early Essene Theology of Revelation,” in *Qumran between the Old and New Testaments*, ed. Frederick H. Cryer and Thomas L. Thompson (Sheffield: Sheffield University Press, 1998), 113–150; Hindy Najman and Judith H. Newman, eds., *The Idea of Biblical Interpretation: Essays in Honor of James L. Kugel*, *SJSJ* 83 (Leiden: Brill, 2004), esp. Elliot R. Wolfson’s “Seven Mysteries of Knowledge: Qumran E/Sotericism Recovered,” 177–214; Benjamin Gladd, *Revealing the Mysterion: The Use of Mystery in Daniel and Second Temple Judaism with Its Bearing on First Corinthians* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2008), 274–277; Samuel I. Thomas, *The “Mysteries” of Qumran: Mystery, Secrecy, and Esotericism in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Leiden: Brill, 2010).

<sup>3</sup> Bockmuehl, *Revelation and Mystery*, 78.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 76–81. Allegory, for Philo, is a mystical quest (cf. *Somm.* 1.164).

and images, and inserted this speculation in the liturgical setting of the Pascha. Within this multifaceted context of the paschal feast, viewed as a central Christian mystery, biblical exegesis acquired the character of a special mystery performance or drama.<sup>5</sup>

## 2. MELITO OF SARDIS'S MYSTERY EXEGESIS

We have seen in the first part of the study that *Peri Pascha* starts with a succession of paradoxical pairs of terms: the mystery of the Pascha (τὸ τοῦ πάσχα μυστήριον) is old and new, eternal and temporary, perishable and imperishable as well as mortal and immortal.<sup>6</sup> Pascha, therefore, is a mystery: first, because the Logos operates in history and rituals in an invisible way; and, second, because rituals initiate humans in a new type of life.

### A. *The Old Mystery of Pesach Performed by Moses*

Turning now to the mysteries of the Passover, as performed by Moses, Melito's *Peri Pascha* 11–14 discloses that God was the source and agent of the old mystery. Although Melito employs the term μυστήριον in the singular and not the plural (τὰ μυστήρια), the word does not refer to a philosophical abstraction but to a genuine action performed by human beings. Differing

<sup>5</sup> While emphasizing mystery terminology, the present chapter does not deny the existence of Jewish vocabulary and themes in the writings of the aforementioned Christian authors. On the contrary, scholars have strongly emphasized this vocabulary, too.

<sup>6</sup> Melito, *PP* 2.6–10. For the nature and character of Christian mysteries, see, for instance: Alfred Loisy, *Les mystères païens et le mystère chrétien* (Paris: Nourry, 1919); Samuel Angus, *The Mystery-Religions and Christianity: A Study in the Religious Background of Early Christianity* (New York: Scribner, 1925); Robert Eisler, *Orphisch-dionysische Mysteriengedanken in der christlichen Antike* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1925; repr. 1966); Odo Casel, *Das christliche Kultmysterium* (Regensburg: Friedrich Pustet, 1932); Hugo Rahner, *Griechische Mythen in christlicher Deutung: Gesammelte Aufsätze von Hugo Rahner* (Zürich: Rhein Verlag, 1945); J.D.B. Hamilton, "The Church and the Language of Mystery: The First Four Centuries," *ETL* 53 (1977): 479–494; Devon H. Wiens, "Mystery Concepts in Primitive Christianity and Its Environment," *ANRW* 2.23.2 (1980): 1248–1284; Louis Bouyer, *Mysterion: Du mystère à la mystique* (Paris: François-Xavier de Guibert/OEIL, 1986); Christoph Riedweg, *Mysterienterminologie bei Platon, Philon und Klemens von Alexandrien* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1987); Jonathan Z. Smith, *Drudgery Divine: On the Comparison of Early Christianities and the Religions of Late Antiquity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990); Carl A.P. Ruck, Blaise D. Staples, and Clark Heinrich, eds., *The Apples of Apollo: Pagan and Christian Mysteries of the Eucharist* (Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press, 2001).

from an abstraction, it is a rite or mystery performance where a divine agent is also supposed to be active. Melito informs us that God himself teaches Moses how to carry out—during the night—the mystery of Israel's salvation, and how the angel of death will bind Pharaoh, while punishing the people of Egypt. Subsequently, in *Peri Pascha* 15–17, Melito portrays Moses as a hierophant, a great initiate in mysteries, officiating a rite for the people of Israel:

Then Moses, when he had slain the sheep, and at night (νόκτωρ) performed the mystery (διατελέσας τὸ μυστήριον) with the sons of Israel, marked (ἐσφράγισεν) the doors of the houses to protect the people and win the angel's respect.<sup>7</sup>

Melito continues his story by narrating how the Israelites, unlike the Egyptians, sacrificed the sheep, ate the Pascha, performed the mystery (τὸ μυστήριον τελεῖται), and became marked with a sign able to gain the respect of the angel of death.<sup>8</sup> Unlike them, the Egyptians did not participate in the ritual, did not take part in the Pascha (ἄμοιροι τοῦ πάσχα), and remained uninitiated in the mystery (ἀμύητοι τοῦ μυστηρίου). The consequence was that they did not benefitiate of the seal of blood (ἀσφράγιστοι τοῦ αἵματος) which protects against the angel of death. The Egyptians, therefore, fell prey to the angel who, in one night, “made them childless.”<sup>9</sup> While in *Peri Pascha* 18–30 Melito describes the calamity and mourning which the angel of death spread over the whole land of Egypt, in 31–33 he explains that Christ was the Lord who worked within the ancient mystery as life, type, and spirit.

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<sup>7</sup> Melito, *PP* 15,88–91. S.G. Hall comments: “Melito regards the Pascha as an initiatory rite with apotropaic effect, and insinuates into 14–16 the language of Christian baptism an unction [implying much mystery language], especially σφραγίζειν, χρίειν, πνεῦμα, ἀμύητος.” (Hall, *Melito*, 9, n. 5) Another scholar, Alistair Stewart-Sykes, argues that *Peri Pascha* might be an early liturgy; see *The Lamb's High Feast: Melito, Peri Pascha, and the Quartodeciman Paschal Liturgy at Sardis* (Leiden: Brill, 1998).

<sup>8</sup> The seal of blood may have a function similar to that of the protective mystery charm (amulet or talisman) against natural calamity or plague. Cf. Peter Kingsley, *Ancient Philosophy, Mystery, and Magic: Empedocles and Pythagorean Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 307–312.

<sup>9</sup> *PP* 16.92–17.104. Criticizing the Egyptians for not being initiated in the mystery of the Pascha might be seen as a general polemic against the pagans. Melito describes the punishment of Egypt in terms of mourning, death, and darkness of Hades. For the connection between children and mystery, see P. Lambrechts, “L'importance de l'enfant dans les religions à mystères,” in *Hommages à Waldemar Deonna* ed. Waldemar Deonna, Collection Latomus 28 (Bruxelles: Revue d'études latines, 1957), 322–333.

### B. *The Theory of Types as Connection between the Two Mystery Series*

Melito defines the relationship between the ancient and new mystery of Pascha through typological exegesis, a method inherited from previous Christian exegetical speculations. Typology interprets several ideas and events of the sacred scriptures of the Jewish people—scriptures accepted by the Christians as well—by associating them with the events of the divine economy which followed the incarnation. For instance, Paul's 1 Cor 10:1–11 and Gal 4:21–31 connects the crossing of the Red Sea with Christian Baptism. Through this typological connection, the crossing of the Sea becomes a figure, or type (ὁ τύπος), for the Christian sacrament (τὸ ἀντίτυπον). Following the same logic, the manna of the desert serves as a type of the Eucharist, while the pillar of cloud or fire stands as the figure of Christ himself. Scholars have called this type of exegesis *typology*, and unveiled the fact that it was a common practice among the Christian writers of the first three centuries. This prompted Jean Daniélou to view typology as the Christian exegesis *par excellence*.

Nevertheless, at least for Melito, Pseudo-Hippolytus, and Origen, typology seems to play the function of connecting the two mystery series of the Logos by relating an old figure or type with its corresponding antitype. They also assume that it was the same divine agent, the Logos-Christ, who acted both in the ancient and the new mysteries. There is, to conclude this brief analysis, only one mystery of the Logos working in human history in various modalities, a mystery in-scripted and codified in the sacred Writ. Paschal hermeneutics represents the effort of unveiling this mystery through deciphering its story in the Bible.

In a similar way, Pseudo-Hippolytus and Origen will organize their discourses following the same bipartite Melitonian structure. The first part is an exposition of the old mystery from Exodus 12 with all its paschal figures and types, while the second becomes an illustration of the true or prefigured realities. Additionally, the first is the mystery of Pesach, with its types (in fact copies *avant-la-lettre*, pre-figurations of the true Pascha), and the second follows the Pascha with its antitypes.

### C. *Melito's Term μυστήριον: From "Secret" to "Performance"*

Justin and Irenaeus, the main Christian exegetes of Melito's time, inherited the method of typology from earlier materials—for example Paul's epistles—and employed said method in several polemics in which they were involved. This can be illustrated through Justin's work, which shows that early Christians and Jews did not agree on the interpretation of the



theophanic passages of the Bible. Likewise, Marcion's followers were not very lenient toward various difficult scriptural passages. Greek philosophers, like Celsus, had an ironical attitude toward uneducated Christian anthropomorphists.<sup>10</sup>

However, the idea that the Bible includes more difficult and obscure words was as ancient as the Bible itself. The text of Prov 1:6, for example, testifies to an early reflection on the notions of "parable" (παραβολή), "obscure word" (σκοτεινὸς λόγος), or "enigma" (ἀνιγμα). Within the Christian context, Justin will call these obscure passages "mystery" (μυστήριον) or "symbol" (σύμβολον), and Christian authors will interpret them mainly typologically.

Although the term μυστήριον already appears in the Pauline corpus, a development of exegesis as mystery performance does not materialize in Christian context before Melito.<sup>11</sup> In Justin's works, the term can be encountered when the writer claims that prophecies describe future events through parables, mysteries, and symbols regarding those events (ἐν παραβολαῖς ἢ μυστηρίοις ἢ ἐν συμβόλοις ἔργων).<sup>12</sup> This is because, generally, the Holy Spirit manifests itself through parable and in a hidden way (ἐν παραβολῇ δὲ καὶ παρακεκαλυμμένως).<sup>13</sup>

Furthermore, the incarnation, according to Justin and Irenaeus, was envisioned as an event which entailed major exegetical consequences, since Christ came and revealed the obscure words of the ancient holy writings.<sup>14</sup> To this point, Irenaeus claims that the message of the good news about Christ

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Marguerite Harl, "Origène et les interprétations patristiques grecques de l'«obscurité» biblique," in her *Le déchiffrement du sens: Études sur l'herméneutique chrétienne d'Origène à Grégoire de Nysse* (Paris: Études augustiniennes, 1993), 89–126.

<sup>11</sup> For Paul, see Rom 11:25; 16:25; 1 Cor 2:1; 2:7; 4:1; 13:2; 14:2; 15:51; Eph 1:9; 3:3–4; 3:9; 5:32; 6:19; Col 1:26–27; 2:2; 4:3; 2 Thess 2:7; 1 Tim 3:9; 3:16. Several times the term obviously refers to the mystery of God, as in 1 Cor 4:1; Eph 3:3; 9; and Col 2:2. However, the term preserves the ancient Jewish meaning of *râz*, as Bockmuehl explains in *Revelation and Mystery*.

<sup>12</sup> Justin, *Dial.* 68.6. Hamilton noticed that "Justin's use of *mysterion* is non-cultic" and Clement was the first to contrast the mysteries of Dionysios with the 'holy mysteries' [in the plural] of Christ (e.g. *Protrep.* 12.118.4); see Hamilton "Language of Mystery," 484–485.

<sup>13</sup> *Dial.* 52.1. Clement of Alexandria will maintain, in his turn, that the Bible was written in parables (cf. *Str.* 5.25.1).

<sup>14</sup> The following fragment is illustrative for this theological vision: "And when Isaiah calls Him [Christ] the Angel of mighty counsel, did he not foretell Him to be the Teacher of those truths which He did teach when He came [to earth]? [...] For if the prophets declared obscurely (παρακεκαλυμμένως) that Christ would suffer, and thereafter be Lord of all, yet that [declaration] could not be understood by any man until He Himself persuaded the apostles that such statements were expressly related in the Scriptures." (Justin, *Dial.* 76. For the English translation, see ANF 1.)

was hidden (κεκρυμμένος) in prophecies and symbolized through types and parables (διὰ τύπων καὶ παραβολῶν ἐσημαίνεται), yet their full meaning could be grasped solely at the time of their fulfillment.<sup>15</sup>

Unlike Justin and Irenaeus, Melito will develop the sense of performance or rite of the term μυστήριον. In his work, the hermeneutical enterprise becomes a mystery performance. Related to his task and role as an exegete, Melito's *Sitz im Leben* was significant, since the allegorical techniques of interpretation emerged in the first century CE with Herakleitos and Cornutus. In addition to the literal and moral methods of interpretation, the Middle Platonists and Neo-Pythagorians invented the mystical method. They used to read Homer's *Odyssey*, for example, as the journey of the soul in quest of its homeland.<sup>16</sup>

Subsequently, Philo and other Jewish writers took over these allegorical techniques and developed them not only in reference to various moral topics but also in connection with mystical themes. In his research on the origins of these allegorical and mystical techniques, Bockmuehl observes that "[t]he mystical technique appears not to have been practiced before Plutarch (c. 45–120 CE), but it went on to find rich development in the second and third centuries, e.g. in Numenius and Porphyry."<sup>17</sup> Consequently, "Philo's employment of all three types of allegory to Scripture would appear to show him on the cutting edge of literary criticism in his day."<sup>18</sup>

In his turn, Melito will apply the mystical technique in the liturgical context of the paschal mystery, while transforming biblical hermeneutics into a veritable quest for God. It is also plausible that the Sardisean bishop adopted and developed this mystery discourse as a polemical reaction to the mystery context of the Asia Minor of the second century. To this point, scholars have investigated in great detail this mystery context and discovered that Asia Minor was characterized, in the first three centuries CE, by a nonviolent competition among mystery societies, a competition sometimes punctuated by a "rhetoric of rivalry."<sup>19</sup> Connected to this cultural milieu, one

<sup>15</sup> *Haer.* 4.26.1.

<sup>16</sup> Bockmuehl, *Revelation and Mystery*, 79–80.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 80.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> See Phillip A. Harland, "Spheres of Contention, Claims of Pre-eminence: Rivalries among Associations in Sardis and Smyrna," in *Religious Rivalries and the Struggle for Success in Sardis and Smyrna*, ed. Richard S. Ascough (Waterloo, ON; Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2005), 53–65.

is reminded that “Ephesians’ Artemis” was also the protectress of the city of Sardis and was celebrated in festivals at least up until the Goths’ invasion in 262 CE. Subsequently, starting from 220 BCE, Zeus becomes the second protector of the city of Sardis, with a colossal statue set up in the temple of Artemis.<sup>20</sup> A late first- or early second-century inscription found at the site warns the *therapeutai* of Zeus not to participate in the mysteries of Sabazios, Agdistis, and Ma.<sup>21</sup>

At the same time, Cybele, the other mother goddess (not identical to Artemis, as today’s historians advise us),<sup>22</sup> was celebrated in the northeastern Anatolian regions, while her worship spread throughout the Roman Empire.<sup>23</sup> Similarly, Attis was also venerated in connection with Cybele. Meanwhile, Sabazios had his special mysteries, which in time become an Asiatic version of the Dionysian feasts.<sup>24</sup> Dionysius, however, had a special annual festival in Sardis established before 150 BCE.<sup>25</sup> Related to this, Peter Herrmann mentions an association of *mystai* of Apollo Pleurenos in Sardis.<sup>26</sup> In addition to all of these divinities, Richard S. Ascough explains that “the inscriptional record from Sardis include Athena, Asklepios, Herakles, Attis, Hermes, Eros, and Iaso.”<sup>27</sup>

The main cities of Asia Minor can be also encountered in the stories regarding Apollonius of Tyana, a famous Neo-Pythagorean prophet and

<sup>20</sup> Nancy H. Ramage, “The Arts at Sardis,” in *Sardis: Twenty-Seven Years of Discovery*, ed. Eleanor Guralnik (Chicago: Chicago Society of the Archeological Institute in America, 1987), 31.

<sup>21</sup> See G.H.R. Horsley, ed., *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity*, vol. 1, *A Review of the Greek Inscriptions and Papyri Published in 1976* (North Ryde, Australia: Macquarie University, 1981), 21–23; Peter Herrmann, “Mystenvereine in Sardis,” *Chiron* (1996):315–348; 329–335.

<sup>22</sup> George M.A. Hanfmann, Louis Robert, and William E. Mierse, “The Hellenistic Period,” in *Sardis from Prehistoric to Roman Times: Results of the Archeological Exploration of Sardis 1958-1975*, ed. George M.A. Hafmann (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983), 129; cf. Ramage, “The Arts at Sardis,” 30.

<sup>23</sup> For the large extent of Cybele worship in Asia Minor, see for instance Maarten J. Vermaseren, *Corpus Cultus Cybelae Attidisque* (CCCA), vol. 1, *Asia Minor* (Leiden: Brill, 1987). For the festivals of Cybele and Attis, see Maarten J. Vermaseren’s *Cybele and Attis: The Myth and the Cult* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1977), esp. 21–23, 110–112. For Jupiter’s worship in Asia Minor, see also Monika Hörig and Elmar Schwerheim, *Corpus Cultus Iovis Dolicheni* (CCID) (Leiden: Brill, 1987), 3–16.

<sup>24</sup> R. Follet and K. Prümm, “Mystères,” *DBSup* 6 (1960): 1–225. Cf. Hanfmann, *Sardis*, 132.

<sup>25</sup> Hanfmann, *Sardis*, 133.

<sup>26</sup> Herrmann, “Mystenvereine in Sardis,” 319.

<sup>27</sup> Ascough, *Religious Rivalries*, 44.

philosopher. His biography, written and sometimes mythologized by Philostratos around 240 CE, offers an emblematic picture for the mentalities of the first three centuries of the Common Era. In another case, no less famous than the aforementioned, we encounter Alexander of Abonuteichos, the second-century prophet satirized by Lucian of Samosata. Second century Asia Minor was, therefore, the center of significant growth in mysteries and mystery mentalities. The scholars specializing in Asia Minor generally agree that religious life in the city of Sardis during these first three centuries was characterized by coexistence with “little antagonism.”<sup>28</sup> Indeed, a certain competition for members and benefactors existed among all of these religious groups, as Phillip A. Harland demonstrates, and this competition was clearly marked by what he calls the “rhetoric of rivalry.”<sup>29</sup> Christian polemical rhetoric, and particularly that of bishops such as Melito, cannot be surprising within this context.<sup>30</sup>

Moreover, Melito employs mystery terminology in his homily and conceives of the Pascha itself as a mystery ritual. During the celebration of the Pascha, the reading of Exodus 12, followed by its ceremonial commentary—the paschal homily—evinces some similarities with the *ἱεροὶ λόγοι* of the mystery cults and their transmission (*παράδοσις*).<sup>31</sup> Placed between the stage of purification (*καθαρμός*) and that of the utmost revelation (*ἐποπτεία*), the stage of *παράδοσις* consisted in a moment in which the sacred knowledge was conveyed, and a preparation for the vision of the mysteries took

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 51. For Jewish-Christian relations, see Neufeld, “Christian Communities in Sardis and Smyrna,” in Ascough, *Religious Rivalries*, 25–39.

<sup>29</sup> Harland, “Spheres of Contention,” 53–65. Cf. Phillip A. Harald, *Associations, Synagogues, and Congregations: Claiming a Place in Ancient Mediterranean Society* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003).

<sup>30</sup> This attitude is not unique in Melito. *Fr.* 8b, from his *On Baptism*, might be an example of “rhetoric of rivalry” against the associates of Isis (the earth), the goddess who bathes in rains and river (Osiris, cf. Plutarch, *Isis* 364a; 367a; Sallustius 4.3), and those of Helios (either Apollo or Attis), who descends into the Ocean. Melito compares them with Christ as the “Sun (*ἥλιος*),” or “dawn,” and “King of heaven” (Hall, *Melito*, 71–73). Compare this divine name, “King of heaven,” with Apollo’s title of “king” (*ἄναξ*) in *Orphica* 34. Moreover, in his *Apology* to Marcus Aurelius, Melito clearly states: “We are not devotees of stones [perhaps a reference to the statues of the gods] which have no sensation, but we are worshippers of the only God who is before all and over all” (Hall, *Melito*, *Fr.* 2.65). Cf. Reidar Aasgaard, “Among Gentiles, Jews, and Christians: Formation of Christian Identity in Melito of Sardis,” in Ascough, *Religious Rivalries*, 156–174.

<sup>31</sup> Walter Burkert argues that books played an important role in the mysteries, especially in the second part of the initiation process, the *παράδοσις*, when the hierophant used to transmit the *ἱεροὶ λόγοι* and explain them; see Burkert, *Ancient Mystery Cults* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 69–78.

place.<sup>32</sup> In his paschal homily, Melito similarly invites his initiates to understand and contemplate the mystery of the Lord. In fact, the bishop invites his audience directly to a vision, also serving the goal of any mystery cult: “to see the mystery of the Lord (τὸ τοῦ κυρίου μυστήριου ἰδέσθαι).”<sup>33</sup> This vision is actually intelligible, since during the Christian *paradosis*, the initiate has to reconstruct and aim to see the series of manifestations of the economic mystery in its traces in Scripture.<sup>34</sup> This hermeneutical process, converted into a mystical experience, becomes a key moment of the paschal mystery.

#### D. *The New Mystery: Christ the Pascha*

Starting with *Peri Pascha* 66, Melito details the series of manifestations of the mystery which the Logos-Christ performed in the “new times,” therefore subsequent to his incarnation. The key idea is that Christ performs both series of the paschal mystery. According to Melito’s christological hermeneutics of the Bible, it is also Christ that suffered mysteriously *in* Abel, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, or David. Likewise, in the new series of mysteries, it is the same Christ who takes flesh through the virgin, suffers, dies, and is buried, to then resurrect to new life. The economy of human salvation from death represents the encompassing mystery fully accomplished at the end of this succession of mysteries.

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<sup>32</sup> Burkert shows that the mysteries of Dionysus implied three degrees. According to Plato’s *Symposium*, the three stages were: 1. ἔλεγχος = purification (201d–202c); 2. instruction, including the myth of origin (203b–e); 3. ἐποπτικά (210a). According to Clement, *Str.* 5.11.71: καθαρός, διδασκαλία, and ἐποπτεία; and Theon of Smyrna 14: καθαρός, παράδοσις, and ἐποπτεία (Burkert, *Mystery Cults*, 153–154).

<sup>33</sup> *PP* 59. See also *PP* 58: “the mystery of the Lord ... seen through a model (διὰ τύπον ὁραθέν).” Cf. Burkert’s note on the mystery cults: “[I]t is certain that this transformation [from anxiety to the joy of finding Kore] went hand in hand with the transition from night to light. The hierophant completed the initiation in the Telesterion ‘amid a great fire’ [Hippol. *Ref.* 5.8.40; Dio Chrys. *Or.* 12.33; Eur. *Phaethon* 59, *Phoen.* 687; Himer. *Or.* 60.4, 8; Plut. *De prof. virt.* 10.81d–e].” (Walter Burkert, *Homo necans: The Anthropology of Ancient Greek Sacrificial Ritual and Myth* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983], 276) Burkert continues: “And the mystai then saw him ‘emerge from the Anaktoron, in the shining nights of the mysteries [Plut. *De prof. virt.* 81e]. A ‘great light’ would become visible ‘when the Anaktoron was opened [Ibid.]’” (Burkert, *Homo Necans*, 277) The vision of light is equally a key feature of Jewish mysticism and, as we have seen in the second part of this study, a central element of the festivals of Pesach and Pascha.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. *PP* 59–60: “Therefore if you wish to see the mystery of the Lord, look at Abel who is similarly murdered, at Isaac who is similarly bound, at Joseph who is similarly sold, at Moses who is similarly exposed, at David who is similarly persecuted, at the prophets, etc.”

Previous scholars have interpreted Melito's paschal theology within the frame of the distinction between the Asiatic literal reading of the Bible—including an emphasis on “passion,” death, and their commemoration—and the later Alexandrian allegorical understanding of Pascha as “passage.”<sup>35</sup> I find this distinction, however, inaccurate. Seen from the perspective of the Second Temple divine titles, Melito's Christology is undoubtedly a high Christology which includes a Yahweh Christology, a Demiurge Christology, and also a Logos Christology. Indeed the idea of passion, according to Melito, marks the history of humanity, but he envisions this passion as the mystery in which the divine Logos himself suffered in all, starting with Abel. Nevertheless, Melito's paschal theology is not only a discourse on passion because the idea of passage is also highly emphasized. The journey from Egypt to the Promised Land—usually associated with Alexandrian paschal hermeneutics and understood as the passage from sin and death to Spirit, life, and light—is also present in *Peri Pascha*:

[H]e ransomed us from the world's service as from the land of Egypt, and freed us from the devil's slavery as from the hand of Pharaoh; and he marked our souls with his own Spirit and the members of our body with his own blood. ... It is he that delivered us from slavery to liberty, from darkness to light, from death to light, from tyranny to eternal royalty, and made us a new priesthood and an eternal people personal to him (περιούσιον).<sup>36</sup>

As a result, Melito conceives of the new human being as a priestly and royal creature who, from that moment on, would dwell in the very proximity (see περιούσιον) to the King of Heaven. The text even suggests an identification of the saved humanity with Christ, because *his* Spirit marks their souls and *his* blood their bodies.

Furthermore, *Peri Pascha* manifests a double dynamic between the types of the old mystery and their models (truth) fulfilled in the new mystery. On the one hand, Christ manifests himself mysteriously through or within the types, and the truth is actively present in the old type. At the end of an imaginary dialogue with the angel of death, Melito exclaims:

<sup>35</sup> E.g., Thomas J. Talley, “Pascha the Center of the Liturgical Year,” in *The Origins of the Liturgical Year*, 1–70; cf. idem, “History and Eschatology in the Primitive Pascha,” *Worship* 47, no. 4 (1973): 212–221. In the second article, Talley surprisingly mentions typology and the passage from death to life and from slavery to freedom as two defining Alexandrian elements (ibid., 218). However, they are also essential features of Melito's paschal theology; cf. Melito, *PP* 49 and 68. See also, a few pages later, my discussion on Origen and Alexandrian paschal tradition.

<sup>36</sup> *PP* 67.461–468; 478. As Hall remarks, the passage recalls *m. Pesah.* 10.5 and *Exod. Rab.* 12.2; see Hall, “Melito in the Light of the Passover Haggadah,” 29–32.

It is clear that your respect was won when you saw the mystery of the Lord occurring in the sheep, the life of the Lord in the slaughter of the lamb, the model of the Lord in the death of the sheep; that is why you did not strike Israel, but made only Egypt childless.<sup>37</sup>

On the other hand, a reverse dynamic emerges from the type in its orientation towards the truth. The mystery of the type is fulfilled in its truth and the old obscure words of the sacred text find their meaning in the light of the new revelation. The bishop of Sardis explains to his initiates: "What is said and what is done is nothing, beloved, without a comparison and preliminary sketch (Οὐδέν ἐστιν, ἀγαπητοί, τὸ λεγόμενον καὶ γινόμενον δίχα παραβολῆς καὶ προκεντήματος)."<sup>38</sup> In other words, the metaphor suggests that every important construction needs a preliminary sketch (τὸ προκέντημα) made out of wax, clay, or wood. Thus, the accomplishment of the divine economy requires a preliminary sketch propedeutically concealed in mystery in the Old Testament and partially unveiled by the prophets. Melito does not see the sketch as the accomplished work (ἔργον) but as a codified picture of the future: what is going to happen can be seen in the image of the type (τὸ μέλλον διὰ τῆς τυπικῆς εἰκόνας ὁρᾶται).<sup>39</sup>

The old mystery is accomplished and revealed while being changed into its truth, as expressed in the following lines: "For indeed the law has become word, and the old new ..., and the commandment grace, and the model (τύπος) truth (ἀλήθεια), and the lamb a Son, and the sheep a Man, and the Man God."<sup>40</sup> And yet, according to a different expression, the type transfers its power into its truth: "The type was made void, conceding its power (ἡ δύναμις) to the truth, and the law was fulfilled, conceding its power to the gospel."<sup>41</sup>

While the series of types is fulfilled in the mystery of the Pascha, the level of initiation remains opened and the fulfilled mystery always new in its being rediscovered.<sup>42</sup>

The mystery of the Lord having been prefigured well in advance and having been seen through a model (διὰ τύπου ὁραθέν), is today believed in now that it

<sup>37</sup> *PP* 32.203–33.212. For the pre-incarnational economy of Christ, see also Pseudo-Hippolytus, *IP* 81–88 and 96, in which Christ is depicted as the one who created the world and man, saved Israel from Egypt, and gave him the law.

<sup>38</sup> *PP* 35.217–218.

<sup>39</sup> *PP* 36.225–226. Cf. *PP* 38.

<sup>40</sup> *PP* 7.

<sup>41</sup> *PP* 42.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. *PP* 56.396–397: "[T]he mystery of the Pascha has been fulfilled in the body of the Lord (τὸ τοῦ πάσχα μυστήριον τετέλεσται ἐν τῷ τοῦ κυρίου σώματι)."

is fulfilled (τετελεσμένον), though considered new by men. For the mystery of the Lord is new and old.<sup>43</sup>

The passage assumes that the mystery of economy is one, though manifested in various ways. Hidden in the letters of the ancient and new Scriptures, it remains forever new every time a new initiate rediscovers it.

### 3. PSEUDO-HIPPOLYTUS'S PASCHAL MYSTERY EXEGESIS

Pseudo-Hippolytus's exegesis of the Pascha is largely indebted to Melito, regarding both the structure of his homily and his theological perspective. Similar to Melito, Pseudo-Hippolytus divides paschal mystery into old and new series and envisages divine economy as developed over two stages, the boundary between them being the event of the incarnation. While in the first part of his homily the author follows the pre-figurations of the future antitypes, in the second part he describes the mysteries of the truth (τὰ τῆς ἀληθείας μυστήρια):<sup>44</sup> Christ's incarnation, passion, resurrection, and ascension. Inheriting a Pauline idea from Col 2:9, Pseudo-Hippolytus expresses the event of the incarnation in these terms: "compressing in himself all the greatness of the divinity ... without diminishing the glory."<sup>45</sup> The text means that Jesus' body encompasses his divinity, while the divine glory, which is invisible, remains undiminished.

Thus, according to Pseudo-Hippolytus, biblical exegesis is a mystery performance as well. Delivered within the liturgical setting of the paschal night, following the ceremonial reading of Exodus 12, the homily becomes the elucidation of the ἱεροὶ λόγοι (or, in the Christian version, θεία γραφή):

While the divine Scripture (θεία γραφή) has mystically (μυστικῶς) pre-announced this sacred feast (ἱερά ἐορτή)<sup>46</sup> [of Pascha], we will now investigate the revealed things in minute detail and search for the hidden mysteries of Scripture in response to your prayers. We will not suppress the truth in what is written, but contemplate through the figures the accuracy of the mysteries (τὴν δὲ ἀκριβείαν τῶν μυστηρίων διὰ τῶν τύπων θεωροῦντες).<sup>47</sup>

<sup>43</sup> *PP* 58.405–412.

<sup>44</sup> *IP* 7.5.

<sup>45</sup> *IP* 45.10–13: πᾶν τῆς θεότητος εἰς ἑαυτὸν συναθροίσας καὶ συναγαγὼν ... οὐ ... τῇ δόξῃ δαπανοῦμενος.

<sup>46</sup> For ἱερά ἐορτή, see especially *Od.* 21.258; *Hdt.* 1.31; 147, *Th.* 2.15; 4.5, and *A.Eu.* 191, where ἐορτή (used nine times in the homily) denotes a religious feast. Melito employed the noun especially in the expression μεγάλη ἐορτή (*PP* 79.565; 92.677).

<sup>47</sup> Pseudo-Hippolytus, *IP* 6.1–6. Cf. *IP* 5.5–7. Cf. Melito's *PP* 36.225–226: τὸ μέλλον διὰ τῆς



While the types (οἱ τύποι), symbols (τὰ σύμβολα), and mysteries (τὰ μυστήρια) have occurred in Israel in a visible way (ὁρατώως), they reached their fulfillment in the Christian Pascha in a spiritual manner (πνευματικῶς τελεσιουργούμενα).<sup>48</sup>

Pseudo-Hippolytus—as a mystagogue knowing the mysteries of Scripture—guides his new initiates along the traces of these scriptural mysteries, namely, the types, connecting them with their antitypes. In so doing, he rememorizes the history of divine economy in its double aspect: in law and incarnation. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that Pseudo-Hippolytus does not criticize the Jewish law but employs only positive epithets to describe it. The exodus from Egypt pre-announced (προαναγγέλλω) the truth (ἀλήθεια) in types (τύποι), and the law pre-interpreted (προερμηνεύω) it in images or copies (εἰκόνες), bringing into being only the shadow of the things to come (τῶν μελλόντων σκιά). But the Christian initiand can discover the models of those copies (τῶν εἰκόνων τὰ μορφώματα), the completions of figures (τῶν τύπων τὰ πληρώματα), and, instead of shadow, the accuracy and confirmation of the truth (ἡ ἀκρίβεια καὶ βεβαίωσις τῆς ἀληθείας).<sup>49</sup>

As Pseudo-Hippolytus elucidates, the new paschal mystery is the common celebration of all (κοινὴ τῶν ὄλων πανήγυρις):<sup>50</sup> it is eternal feast for angels and archangels, life for the entire world, wound for death, food for humans, and the sacred ritual (ιερά τελετή)<sup>51</sup> of heaven and earth. It

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τυπικῆς εἰκόνας ὁράται; and 38.245–247: τοῦ μέλλοντος ἐν αὐτῷ τῆν εἰκόνα βλέπεις. See also Clement, *Str.* 1.13.4. Contemplation (θεωρία) and to contemplate (θεωρέω) a feast (πανήγυρις or ἑορτή) as well as associated verbs such as ὁράω and νοέω reflect a mystery terminology which recalls a basic fact of mystery cults, namely that of seeing what is manifested in the ceremony. The so-called θεωροί were ambassadors or spectators at the oracles or games. See, for instance, *Pl. Phd* 58b; *Pl. Lg* 650a; *D.* 21.115; *X. Mem* 4.8.2; *Decr. Byz. ap. D.* 18.91; *Plb.* 28.19.4; *S.OT* 1491.

<sup>48</sup> *IP* 7.1–3. The verb τελεσιουργέω, especially in its participial forms as τελεσιουργόν, as well as the noun τελεσιουργία often occurs, for instance, in Iamblichus' treatise *De Mysteriis*, most likely written in the same period. See *Iamblichus: De mysteriis*, ed. and trans. Emma C. Clarke, John M. Dillon, and Jackson P. Hershbell (Leiden: Brill, 2004).

<sup>49</sup> *IP* 2.9–10.

<sup>50</sup> For the religious character of πανήγυρις, see Archil. 120; *Pi.O.* 9.96; *Hdt.* 2.59, 58; *Th.* 220. For its connection with the verb θεωρέω, see *Ar. Pax* 342 and *Decr. ap. D.* 18.91.

<sup>51</sup> *IP* 3.28. Liddell-Scott's *A Greek-English Lexicon* translates τελετή as rite, esp. initiation in the mysteries (*Hdt.* 2.171; *And.* 1.111; *Pl. Euthd* 277d; *Hdt.* 4.79), mystic rites practiced at initiation (*E. Ba* 22, 73 (*lyr.*), *Ar. V.* 121; *Pax* 413, 419; *Id. Ra* 1032; *D.* 25.11; *Pl. Phdr* 244e; *Id. R.* 365a, *Prt.* 316d; *Isoc* 4.28), a making magically potent (*PMagPar* 1.1596, *PMagLond* 46.159, 121.872) a festival accompanied by mystic rites or sacred office, *Decr. ap. D.* 59.104, or theological doctrines (in a plural form in *Chrysipp. Stoic.* 2.17). Τελετή means 'rite' as early as the Orphic tradition from at least the fifth century BCE, as one can see in G.S. Kirk, J.E. Raven, and M. Schofield, eds., *The Presocratic Philosophers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 221.

prophesizes, therefore unveils, old and new mysteries which can be scrutinized in a visible way (ὄρατῶς βλεπόμενα) on earth and perceived through the mind (νοούμενα) in heaven.<sup>52</sup>

A central element in every mystery ceremony consists in an actual participation in a sacred or consecrated substance. This is the process of eating the consecrated offerings (τὰ ἱερά). For the Israelites, in Pseudo-Hippolytus's view, the consecrated offerings eaten in a mystery rite were obviously the paschal lamb. For Christians, the paschal lamb is just the figure of Pascha and Eucharist. With spiritual knowledge, they consume a mystery substance which brings death's defeat.<sup>53</sup> In each case, the author does not speak metaphorically but rather concretely. Another main element of mystery celebrations consists in the preservation of the secrets performed and contemplated in the ceremony within the group of initiates. For Pseudo-Hippolytus, the group is the ecclesia, and the central secret is eating the Pascha or the sacred body of Christ.<sup>54</sup>

Pursuing this intelligible or noetic itinerary of contemplating the divine manifestations of the Logos in figures and truths, Christians eventually become initiated into old and new mysteries and possessing the sacred knowledge (οἱ τὰ καινὰ καὶ παλαιὰ μετὰ γνώσεως ἱερᾶς μεμνημένοι) of the old and new manifestations of the divine economy.<sup>55</sup>

#### 4. MYSTERY EXEGESIS IN ORIGEN'S PASCHAL TRACTATE

Mystery exegesis may be also encountered in Origen's *Peri Pascha*. According to few surviving vestiges, there were other paschal documents at the time Origen composed this particular writing.<sup>56</sup> Among them, those belonging to Apollinarius of Hierapolis and Clement of Alexandria are fragmentarily preserved in the Byzantine document entitled the *Chronicon pascale*. In spite of a reduced quantity of preserved material, at least two new ideas may be discerned within these documents, two ideas commonly shared with Origen's work.

<sup>52</sup> *IP* 3.30–31.

<sup>53</sup> *IP* 50.5–6.

<sup>54</sup> *IP* 40 and 41.

<sup>55</sup> *IP* 4.1–2.

<sup>56</sup> I.e., the paschal writings of Apollinarius of Hierapolis, Irenaeus of Lyons, Victor of Rome, Clement of Alexandria, and Hippolytus of Rome. See Giuseppe Visona, "Pasqua quattodecimana e cronologia evangelica della passione," *Eph. Lit.* 102 (1988): 259–315, at 266.

First, while in Melito and Pseudo-Hippolytus we find two Quartodeciman authors, Apollinarius and Clement were anti-Quartodeciman.<sup>57</sup> Second, while Melito and Pseudo-Hippolytus developed the etymology of the Greek word *πάσχα* from the Greek verb *πάσχω* (*to suffer, to be affected*), Clement took over Philo's position according to which the word *πάσχα* does not have its origins in the Greek *πάσχω* but in the Hebrew *פסח* (*pesach*).<sup>58</sup> To this point, the Greek word *πάσχα* represents a transcription of the Aramaic *ܫܦܫܐ* (*pasha*).<sup>59</sup> Origen will assume, therefore, the anti-Quartodeciman position and the idea that *πάσχα* means "passage" or "crossing."

Apparently, the understanding of Pascha as *passage* was Jewish Hellenistic commonplace: Josephus translated it by *ὑπερβασία*,<sup>60</sup> Philo used *διάβασις* and *διαβατήρια*,<sup>61</sup> and Aquila rendered it with *ὑπέρβασις*.<sup>62</sup> In correlation with this, Origen employed the term of *διάβασις*, most likely inheriting the notion from either Clement or directly from Philo.<sup>63</sup> Similarly, another Philonian

<sup>57</sup> *Chronicon pascale*, PG 92.80c–81a.

<sup>58</sup> Philo, *Congr.* 100–106. For Clement, see *Chronicon pascale*, PG 92.81a–c. Moreover, according to Eusebius' testimony (*Hist. Eccl.* 4.26.4; 4.13.9), Clement also wrote a text entitled *Peri Pascha* and used, for its redaction, Melito's treatise with the same title, *Peri Pascha*. For *פסח*, see L. Koehler and W. Baumgartner, *Lexicon in Veteris Testamentis* (Leiden: Brill, 1958), 769: nif.: *grow lame*; qal: 1. *be lame, limp*; 2. *limp over at, pass over, spare* (as in Exod 12:13, 23, 27); nif. impf.: *be lamed*; pi. impf.: *limp (worshipping) around* (1 Kgs 18:26).

<sup>59</sup> Guéraud and Nautin, *Origène*, 114. Cf. M. Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature*, II (New York 1950), 1194. In these writings, *פסח* means Passover festival, Passover sacrifice, or Passover meal. The form in discussion, *שפסח*, can be found in *Targ. O. Exod* 12:11; *Targ. 2 Chr* 30:18; *y. Sabb.* 8; *Targ. 1 Sam.* 15:4.

<sup>60</sup> *Ant.* 2.313.

<sup>61</sup> *Leg.* 3.94; 154; 165; *Sacr.* 63; *Migr.* 25; *Her.* 192; *Congr.* 106; *Spec.* 2.147. See also that already in the second century BCE, Aristobolus used the term τὰ διαβατήρια to refer to the festival of Pascha, as Jean Riaud shows in "Pâque et Sabbat dans les fragments I et V d'Aristobule," in *Le temps et les temps dans les littératures juives et chrétiennes au tournant de notre ère*, eds. Christian Grappe and Jean-Claude Ingelaere (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 108–123. However, Samuel Loewenstamm interestingly argues for the thesis that the Pesach was originally an apotropaic ritual eventually incorporated within the Exodus narrative; see Loewenstamm, *The Evolution of the Exodus Tradition*, 184 ff.; 207. He prefers to understand the meaning of the verb *pāsaḥ* (and its root *psh*) as "shield, protect," rather than "pass over" (*ibid.*, 219–221), and considers, therefore, the whole Alexandrian Hellenistic tradition of the Pesach terminology of passage as a "theologically tendentious interpolation" (*ibid.*, 219; cf. 198–206).

<sup>62</sup> F. Field, *Origenis Hexaplorum quae supersunt*, I (Oxford, 1875), 100.

<sup>63</sup> Clement, *Str.* 2.11.51.2. The link between the meaning of Pascha and passage can be seen in the rabbinic traditions, for instance, in *m. Pesah.* 10.5 and *Exod. Rab.* 12.2, and also in Melito's *PP* 68.472–476. For a detailed discussion on this Alexandrian terminology of "passage" present in Origen, see Buchinger, *Pascha*, 397–412. As Buchinger astutely remarks, Origen connects this terminology of passage with mystery terminology (*Pascha*, 867–892). In doing so, Origen makes of the Pascha, as previously Melito and Pseudo-Hippolytus, a

feature preserved in Origen's writings is the fact that *πάσχα* refers allegorically to the passage from the sensible to the intelligible world.<sup>64</sup>

#### A. Paschal Mystery Exegesis and Eucharistic Sacrifice

Origen is conceptually indebted not only to Clement, Philo, and their Alexandrian tradition but also to Melito and, consequently, to his Asiatic context. On the one hand, we have seen before that Clement himself wrote a paschal writing inspired by Melito and other elders of the early Church. On the other hand, scholars have shown that Origen is indebted to the bishop of Sardis for various aspects of his hermeneutics.<sup>65</sup> Exegesis as a mystery performance at the paschal feast might also be inspired by the Asiatic approach. According to Origen, the *ἱεραὶ γραφαὶ* describe how God ordered the ancient Israelites to fulfill a sacred service (*ἱερουργία*) and a sacred sacrifice (*ἱεροθυσίαι*) in a mystical way (*μυστηριωδῶς*).<sup>66</sup>

As for the New Testament, the Alexandrian preserves the traditional distinction between type/figure and antitype/truth and makes the following liturgical-eucharistic statement:

We have to sacrifice the true lamb (*πρόβατον*) in order to be sanctified/consecrated priests (*ἱερωθῶμεν*) or to come closer to the priestly status and have to *burn* and *eat* his flesh. ... He Himself says that this Pascha is not sensible (*αἰσθητόν*) but intelligible (*νοητόν*): *If you do not eat my flesh and drink my blood, you will not have life in yourself* (Jn 6:53). Should we eat His flesh and drink His blood in a sensible way? But if He speaks in an intelligible way, then Pascha is not sensible, but intelligible.<sup>67</sup>

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passage from the sensible to the noetic and mystery realm of reality; see also next chapter on Pseudo-Hippolytus.

<sup>64</sup> Philo, *Spec.* 2.145–147; *Mos.* 2.224; *Her.* 192; *Migr.* 25; *QE* 1.4–19. In spite of these two key differences, I would point out that the tradition of interpreting Pascha as the passage from slavery and death to light and spiritual life is also present in Melito and Pseudo-Hippolytus (for instance, *IP* 3.30–31; 7.1–3), as we have noticed in our previous chapters and subchapters.

<sup>65</sup> Campbell Bonner emphasized the Melitonian inspiration of the Origenian passage *Hom. Lev.* 10.1, in which Origen describes the relation between the Old and New Testament through the idea of preliminary sketch; see Bonner, *Homily*, 56–72. In a similar way, Jean Daniélou proves that Origen quoted the Sardisian a few times, e.g., in *Comm. Pss.* 3.1, *Comm. Gen.* 1.26, or *Comm. Matt.* 10.9–11 (“Figure et événement chez Meliton,” 290–292). The large amount of Melitonian themes, their diversity, and the number of Origenian treatises in which these themes appear constitute an argument for the idea that the bishop of Sardis was an important theological authority for the great Alexandrian.

<sup>66</sup> Origen, *Pasch.* 39.9–29.

<sup>67</sup> *Pasch.* 13.3–35. In chapter 26, Origen explains how the flesh, i.e. the Scripture, does not have to be eaten “green,” which means literally interpreted, but cooked on the fire of the Holy Spirit, and in this way spiritually read.

In this fragment, Pascha is identified with the Eucharist, and the Jewish Pesach thus becomes the type of the Christian Eucharist. Origen inserts his exegetical vision in this liturgical or ritualistic context. Taking a look at the goal of the paschal ritual, the modern reader can notice that the participants in this ritual (expressed in the plural first person) have to become consecrated priests or sanctified, or at least closer to the priestly status. The verb exploited in this context is ἱερόω, which in the active voice means “to make holy/ to consecrate to the gods.” The passive voice, as in the present passage, offers, however, a different meaning: “being a consecrated priest.”<sup>68</sup> The conception most likely recalls the idea of a universal priesthood of Christians (see 1 Pt 2:5), because every partaker of the Eucharist actually sacrifices (θύω) and eats Christ’s body.

One of the most fascinating ideas in this hermeneutical context is the aforementioned activity of eating the divine noetic body of Christ. Origen inserts the idea of eating the divine body in a context in which he corroborates this eucharistic theme with the paschal context: Those who eat the sacred body will have life, while those who do not eat will possess no defense against the angel of death who is described with a term from Heb 11:28, “the destroyer” (ὁ ὀλοθρεύων).<sup>69</sup> In the multifaceted discourse of the Alexandrian, therefore, liturgy and hermeneutics join together with the soteriology and epistemology of the divine. Origen further classifies those who will survive the destroyer by means of the degrees of advancement in mysteries. The perfect ones, who fight for their purity and consume from the lambs’ flock and from the wheat bread, are ranked as first. They live rationally (more precisely, they are akin to the Logos: λογικῶς), with untainted food, more appropriate for their spiritual level. Secondly, there are those still under sin, still fighting their imperfection. Their dietary symbol is the eating from the kids’ flock and barley bread.<sup>70</sup>

### B. *Mystery Exegesis and Paschal Liturgical Context*

The liturgical and hermeneutical dimensions of the discourse fuse several times in the noetic horizon where Origen places the goal of liturgy: “If the

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<sup>68</sup> Liddell-Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 1:823. For textual references, see *Pl.Lg.* 771b; *Inscriptiones Graecae, Voluminum ii et iii*, ed. J. Kirchner, 1126.16; *Berl.Sitzb.* 1927.8; Aeschin. 1.19.

<sup>69</sup> *Pasch.* 14.10; 13.

<sup>70</sup> *Pasch.* 23.

lamb is Christ and Christ is the Logos, what is the flesh of the divine words in that case if not the divine Scriptures?"<sup>71</sup> A few pages later, he writes: "we participate in Christ's flesh, this is the divine Scriptures."<sup>72</sup> Thus, the Holy Writ with its words is actually a manifestation and a materialization of the noetic Logos in the sensory-perceptible universe. Accordingly, the exegetical itinerary is not an accretion of new data but a passage from the aesthetic to the noetic, being accomplished with a participation in the mystery wherein the initiate becomes capable of eating the intelligible flesh of God.<sup>73</sup> Origen further develops in this framework the mystery idea of the dismembered deity.<sup>74</sup> According to him, only those who struggle towards eating the "entrails" (τὰ ἐντοσθίδια) of the divine body will be able to see (ὄψονται) the depths of God (τὰ βάθη τοῦ θεοῦ).<sup>75</sup> He clearly specifies that the one who eats the entrails of the divine body becomes an initiate into the mysteries (ὁ ἐν μυστηρίοις μυσούμενος).<sup>76</sup>

The Alexandrian assumes that Christians take part in Christ's body in varying degrees: some of them in the head, others in the hands, feet, chest, entrails, or viscera.<sup>77</sup> Hence, there are different degrees of initiation, and those who consume the viscera reach the highest level of participation, becoming initiated in the meaning (λόγος) of the mystery of the incarnation, which is the central mystery.<sup>78</sup> Thus, Origen can conceive of a hierarchy among paschal mysteries. While the Old Testament paschal mysteries (*mysteria paschae* [in Lat.]) were changed at the emergence of the New Testament, the New Testament mysteries (*mysteria* [Lat.]) will be removed, in their turn, at the time of resurrection.<sup>79</sup>

<sup>71</sup> *Pasch.* 26.5–8.

<sup>72</sup> *Pasch.* 33.1–3.

<sup>73</sup> For the Dionysian ritual of consuming raw flesh distributed in many parts, see Clement's *Protreptikos* 2.12.2. Cf. Pseudo-Hippolytus, *IP* 23–28.

<sup>74</sup> As Burkert affirms: "The basic idea of an initiation ritual is generally taken to be that of death and rebirth" (Burkert, *Mystery Cults*, 99). He further gives examples from various mystery cults such as Isis and Osiris, and Dionysius and Persephone. The Mithraic monuments also "indicate that the day of the initiation ritual was a new birthday; the *mystes* was *natus et renatus*." (ibid., 100). Cf. Mircea Eliade, *Rites and Symbols of Initiation: The Mysteries of Birth and Rebirth* (New York: Harper, 1975, 1st ed. 1958).

<sup>75</sup> Origen, *Pasch.* 31.17–19. Cf. Pseudo-Hippolytus, *IP* 29.

<sup>76</sup> Origen, *Pasch.* 31.23–24.

<sup>77</sup> *Pasch.* 30 and 31.

<sup>78</sup> *Pasch.* 31.25–27.

<sup>79</sup> *Pasch.* 32.20–28. As de Lubac noticed in his *Histoire et Esprit: L'intelligence de l'Écriture d'après Origène* (Paris: Cerf, 2002), 219, the idea of the threefold Pascha (Jewish, Christian, and heavenly) also comes forth in other Origenian writings, such as *Hom. Num.* 11.4, *Comm. Matt.* 80, or *Comm. Jo.* 10.16.18.

The Origenian exegetical itinerary as well as the Melitonian one display and make discernible Christ's manifestations in Scripture. They are avenues by which the words of the sacred text turn into transparent enigmas and mirrors of the things to come (here the Alexandrian recalls 1 Cor 13:12). In Origen's view, the flesh, blood, and bones correspond symbolically to the elements of the sacred text through which the heavenly realities may be discerned. While "bones" denote the words (αὶ λέξεις) of Scripture and "flesh" refers to their meanings (τὰ νοήματα), "blood" is the faith which saves the initiated from the "destroyer."<sup>80</sup> The parallel to the myth of the dismembered deity carries on with the idea of a new birth (παλιγγενεσία). For Origen, the true Pascha has to stand, in a spiritual way, for the passage from darkness to light, which is a new birth (γένεσις).<sup>81</sup> The meaning of a new birth cannot be different from the passage to a perfect behavior (τέλεια πολιτεία) and a perfect love (τέλεια ἀγάπη), which may start from this earthly existence.<sup>82</sup>

The use of mystery terminology sets the Origenian discourse in a Greek mystery trend, as previously demonstrated through the works of Melito, Pseudo-Hippolytus, and Clement, but, nevertheless, one where the content is Christian and liturgical. Expressing the Christian cult in mystery terminology, Origen's rhetorical aim is actually to affirm the Christian cult as a superior mystery to the Greek ones. Most likely, in their polemic with the Greek mystery religions, Melito, Pseudo-Hippolytus, Clement, and Origen employed the same strategy as in the case of assuming the Greek philosophical terminology. Thus, their rhetorical strategy towards Greek philosophy and mysteries was to borrow terminology from these intellectual milieus and claim that, in fact, Christian community is the one which owns the "true" philosophy, and this is the place where someone can find the "highest" mysteries.

### C. Typology vs. Allegory in Paschal Mystery Exegesis?

The purpose of this study does not justify an inquiry of other aspects of the Origenian exegesis, previously explored by several scholars.<sup>83</sup> Nevertheless, a final matter which requires attention in this treatise is the relationship

<sup>80</sup> Origen, *Pasch.* 33.20–34.2.

<sup>81</sup> *Pasch.* 3 and 4.

<sup>82</sup> *Pasch.* 4.36–5.2.

<sup>83</sup> For a thorough presentation and a very comprehensive bibliography on Origen's exegesis, see, for example, Charles Kannengiesser, *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 1:536–574.

between mystery exegesis and Origen's general exegetical view.<sup>84</sup> According to his theory, the Alexandrian distinguishes among literary (historical), moral (psychological), and allegorical (spiritual, mystical) exegesis.<sup>85</sup> The last of these exegetical methods is of particular concern to this investigation. In short, Origen believes that the sacred text is abundant in the mysteries of the Holy Spirit, while the exegetical effort produces a change within the initiated interpreter.<sup>86</sup> The thought is also present in Clement of Alexandria from whom Origen perhaps inherited it.<sup>87</sup> Thus, several questions can be raised at this point: Is typology different from allegory, as Danielou suggested, particularly in *Peri Pascha*, in which the word "allegory" does not occur, as well as in the works of Melito and Pseudo-Hippolytus? Are they the same thing, as de Lubac affirmed? Likewise, is there a distinction between the horizontal and the vertical dimensions, as Crouzel proposed?

In Origen's view, the end of mystical initiation is not obvious in terms of horizontal or vertical spatiality. There are passages in which Christ is encountered on earth, where his body is consumed—similar to the texts of the two Asiatic theologians—and passages in which the vertical dimension becomes obvious, as along with the implied allegory. Furthermore, Origen preserves the mystery exegesis developed by the Asia Minor theologians and, at the same time, emphasizes more powerfully the Platonic distinction between the sensible realities and their intelligible models.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Origen did not write his *Peri Pascha* in his youth, but the work represents a mature oeuvre composed during his stay in Caesarea between 235–248; i.e., between the writing of his commentaries on John and those on Matthew, most likely around 245 (Guéraud and Nautin, *Origène*, 109).

<sup>85</sup> Cf. Origen, *Princ.* 4.2.4–6; *Hom. Gen.* 2.6 etc. For contemporary scholarship, see for example H. Crouzel, *Origen*, 111–140; B. de Margerie, *Introduction à l'histoire de l'exégèse: Tome I, Les Pères grecs et orientaux* (Paris: Cerf, 1980), 115–126; Richard P.C. Hanson, *Allegory and Event* (Richmont: John Knox Press, 1959).

<sup>86</sup> As Crouzel formulates it, using categories of Platonic origins, 2Cor 3:18 "is for the Alexandrian the origin of the theme of transforming contemplation [of the Logos in Scriptures], that is the shaping of the contemplator to the image of the contemplated by a kind of spiritual mimesis (*Origen*, 68)." See also Couzel's *Origène et la "connaissance mystique,"* 324–370, 400–409, and Hans Urs von Balthasar's "Le Mysterion d'Origène," *RSR* 26 (1936): 513–562 and 27 (1937): 38–64.

<sup>87</sup> Cf. de Margerie, *Introduction*, 95–112. Analyzing Clement's exegesis, de Margerie states: "Pour dégager la signification et la vie cachée sous cette parole [Christ's word], le croyant doit s'assimiler à ces vérités, se purifier par la pratique des commandements pour participer à la sainteté de Dieu." (*ibid.*, 97). For textual data in Clement, see *Str.* 5.24.1; 25.1; 56.2–57.2; 93.4; 6.124.4–6; 126.1–4; 127.4; 131.3–5.

<sup>88</sup> E.g., *Comm. Jo* 1.24. Certain Platonic distinctions (especially that between paradigm and



Incidentally, the vertical dimension cannot be found in the Pauline passage about allegory, where the two wives of Abraham refer to the Old and New Testament (Gal 4:20–24). Because of its very large original sense (“speaking about something else”), the notion of “allegory” has a broader extension than that of “typology.” Perhaps a distinction more suitable to the textual data is the one which Frances M. Young employs; namely, typology is a form of allegory.<sup>89</sup> For this reason, allegory can incorporate typology as a genus incorporates a species. From a historical perspective, the extensive Alexandrian use of allegory offered a larger hermeneutical freedom than the Asia Minor theologians had. But this freedom at times brought speculative constructions lacking a sound connection with the biblical text. According to one of Burkert’s insights, any allegory in a religious context is mystical, as Demetrius and Macrobius illustrated.<sup>90</sup> In this way, the typology used in a mystery context, including those of the three Christian authors analyzed in this chapter, might also be considered an allegory.

## 5. CONCLUSION

What I have argued in this section leads to the conclusion that biblical exegesis in the paschal context of the first three centuries in Asia Minor and Alexandria was part of a complex liturgical-exegetical system aimed at reaching the knowledge of Christ the Logos. Within that context, exegesis was not a mere pious reading or a sheer intellectual exercise but rather a cultic-ritualistic inquiry through which the exegete undergoes transformation and encounters the actual manifestations of the Logos. It seems that paschal hermeneutics played a role in the liturgy similar to the transmission and explication of the *ἱεροὶ λόγοι* in the mystery cults. Moreover, the Asia Minor theologians developed the hermeneutical practice of distinguishing two series of manifestations of the paschal mystery where typology had the

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copy) also occur in Melito (e.g., *PP* 37–39) and Pseudo-Hippolytus (e.g., *IP* 2.1–8; 6.8–10). Moreover, the last one also discloses the idea that mystery exegesis translates the exegete from the sensible to the intelligible world (*IP* 3.30–31; 6.8–10).

<sup>89</sup> Young, *Biblical Exegesis*, 198. On page 201, Young also underlines certain species of typology: exemplary (biographical), prophetic (historical), spatial, and recapitulative.

<sup>90</sup> Burkert, *Mystery Cults*, 78–82. Demetrius, in his *On Style* 101 (300 BCE–100 CE), states that “the mysteries too are expressed in the form of allegory, in order to arouse consternation and dread, just as they are performed in darkness and night.” Macrobius, in *S. Sc* 1.2.17 f., concurs: “Thus the mysteries themselves are hidden in the tunnels of figurative expression.” See Burkert, *Mystery Cults*, 79.

function of connecting the two series. On the basis of Young's and Burkert's understanding of allegory, it can be asserted that the typology used in this mystery context was a form of allegory.

Origen, in his turn, probably took over the mystery exegesis of Pascha from diverse media, such as Philo, Clement, and Asia Minor theologians and developed it in connection with, if not even within the context of, the paschal feast. The Alexandrian theologian also employed the two mysteries theory together with the theory of types. In addition, Pseudo-Hippolytus and Origen developed a eucharistic dimension in connection with the feast of Pascha by envisioning initiation into God's knowledge as eating the divine and noetic body of the Logos.

Generally speaking, it might be suggested that Melito, Pseudo-Hippolytus, and Origen associated the paschal liturgical event with an exegetical moment in which, as in a dramatic performance, the audience was urged to discover and contemplate God's manifested mysteries in the sufferings of Abel, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph, in the sacrificed lamb and the salvation from Egypt as well as in Christ's incarnation, salvific passions, death, resurrection, and ascension. Paschal exegesis was, therefore, not an abstract ratiocination, but a cultic activity intended to lead to the noetic contemplation and consumption of Christ.



## CHAPTER EIGHT

### UNRAVELING A THEOPHANIC TEXT—EXODUS 12: TYPOLOGY AS A METHOD OF DECODING HEAVENLY MYSTERIES

The Chester Beatty papyrus XII, in which Bonner found Melito's *Peri Pascha*, includes as well *1 Enoch* and the *Apocryphon of Ezekiel*. Is there a common point among these materials? Did the redactor notice apocalyptic elements in *Peri Pascha*? Beyond all these questions, the present chapter advances a new understanding of the paschal typological method. Through an apocalyptic lens, it may be regarded as a method of disclosing divine mysteries. Perhaps surprisingly, a comparable method can be found in the interpretation of the heavenly mysteries which Daniel conveys to his audience and Enoch shares with his son Methuselah, his inheritance, the watchers, and to all of humanity. Previous scholars have observed that the revelation of heavenly mysteries represents an essential feature of Jewish apocalyptic literature.<sup>1</sup> Benjamin Gladd even argues that this mystery paradigm starts with Daniel. He further observes that mystery language in apocalyptic literature is frequently connected with three epistemic capacities specialized in perceiving the heavenly and eschatological mysteries of God. These epistemic capacities are the true eye, ear, and heart, as opposed to the ordinary eye, ear, and heart.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See Bornkamm, "Μυστήριον κτλ," esp. 821; Rowland, *Open Heaven*, 14; Bockmuehl, *Revelation and Mysteries*, 31–32; Gladd, *Revealing the Mysterion*. They make extensive investigations on the concepts of *raz*, *sar*, and *mysterion* in Daniel, sapiential literature, apocalyptic and Qumran texts, Aristobulus, Artapanus, the *Orphica*, Pseudo-Phocylides, Philo, Josephus, and early rabbinic literature. While the origins of these terms are Babylonian and Greek, they denote—in almost all these Jewish sources—a divine or heavenly secret revealed to human knowledge. Bockmuehl, for instance, defines "mystery" in the following terms: "By 'Mystery' is meant any reality of divine or heavenly origin specifically characterized as hidden, secret, or otherwise inaccessible to human knowledge." (*Revelation and Mystery*, 2).

<sup>2</sup> Gladd, *Revealing the Mysterion*, 274–277. There are also some biblical references where this type of epistemic sensory language is also used in connection with the knowledge of God, e.g., Deut 29:4; 28:45; Isa 6:9–10; Jer 5:21; Ezek 12:2 (ibid.). They are directly connected with the idea of mystery of the kingdom, for instance in Matt 13:9–13.

Apocalyptic epistemology involves another essential element originating in the paradigmatic Danielic figure; namely, the hermeneutical technique of interpreting parables.<sup>3</sup> Echoing such figures of inspired prophets and interpreters of divine signs as Daniel and Enoch, our three theologians decipher parables as a method of unveiling divine mysteries. They decipher in parables God's most secret things regarding salvation and, in particular, the mystery of the Son of Man.<sup>4</sup> Consequently, it is within this apocalyptic epistemological context that I intend to introduce the concept of typology. In general terms, Christian typology denotes the method of interpretation in which the events narrated in the Old Testament represent the types, or pre-figurations, of Christ's activity.<sup>5</sup> However, Melito, Pseudo-Hippolytus, and Origen are not simply connecting such things as the crossing of the Red Sea with Baptism. Instead, their typological enterprise carries with it also an intention aimed at revealing the heavenly mysteries. This intention and its implied epistemology are very similar to those of the Jewish tradition of the

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<sup>3</sup> See Priscilla Patten, "The Form and Function of Parable in Select Apocalyptic Literature and Their Significance for Parables in the Gospel of Mark," *NTS* 29, no. 2 (1983): 246–258. The author investigates *4 Ezra*, *1 Enoch*, and *2 Baruch*.

<sup>4</sup> The idea possibly interprets Dan 7:13, the passage about the enigmatic figure of the "One like the son of man."

<sup>5</sup> For a detailed analysis of the central biblical themes which received a typological interpretation in early Christianity (e.g., Adam, Noah, the flood, Abraham sacrificing Isaac, the exodus, or the fall of Jericho), see Jean Daniélou's classic *Sacramentum Futuri: Études sur les origines de la typologie biblique* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1950). According to his perspective, Christian allegory was inspired from Philo and essentially Greek. However, for Henri de Lubac, on the basis of Gal 2:24, allegory was as Christian as typology. Moreover, for de Lubac "Origen's allegorism is typological," and the distinction between typology and allegory seems to be analogous to that between theory and practice ("Typologie et allégorisme," *RevScRel* 34 [1947]: 220–221). Other researchers such as Henri Crouzel, while seeing in allegory the method through which various terrestrial realities symbolize celestial entities, envision typology as the method through which one historical reality denotes another historical reality (especially an event from the New Testament or having Christ as subject); see Crouzel, *Origen* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1989), 80–81. Leonhard Goppelt's study *Typos: The Typological Interpretation of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982) should also be mentioned for its investigation of the typological method in the Old and New Testaments and of the connection between typology and apocalypticism. See also Jean Pépin's research on the origins of allegory—*Mythe et allégorie: Les origines grecques et les contestations judéo-chrétiennes* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1976) and *La tradition de l'allégorie de Philon d'Alexandrie à Dante* (Paris: Études augustiniennes, 1987)—and his perspective according to which the term "typology" is preferable to that of "allegory" for Christian exegesis, since allegory is a spiritual exegesis more general than typology (*Mythe*, 501). Frances M. Young's position, according to which typology is a form of allegory, is also not far from Pépin's standpoint; see Young, *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture* (Cambridge: University Press, 1997), 198.

divine scribe or mediator who reveals heavenly mysteries. This epistemological paradigm occurs for the first time in its full complexity in the Ethiopic Enochic corpus, especially in the *Book of Parables*, a text produced around the first century BCE to the first century CE. Like Enoch, Melito, Pseudo-Hippolytus, and Origen intend to be revealers of divine information and to serve as receptacles, divine scribes, and interpreters of this information. This most elevated knowledge consists in the deepest secrets of God, the universe, and the human being. In conclusion, interpreting the enigmatic parables of the sacred text leads to revelation of divine mysteries.

Comparable to Enoch, these authors played the role of messengers, mediators, scribes, and translators of parables—the linguistic conundrums incorporating divine mysteries.<sup>6</sup> As a distinctive mark, however, their great mysteries are not in heaven but rather here on earth, because the Son of Man, or the *Kabod*, assumed the form of humanity and descended to earth. His mysteries of salvation are the mysteries of economy. In this instance, Christ the Logos is the heavenly Wisdom descended to earth. The treasury of mysteries and the source of revelation who reveals the deepest mysteries of God is now a terrestrial reality, an element which marks a significant turning point in this apocalyptic paradigm. While divine mysteries are now to be encountered on earth, ascension is preserved for the eschatological journey in which Christ raises the whole of humankind to the Father. Where Enoch

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<sup>6</sup> This kind of epistemology may be associated with the “charismatic exegesis” practiced in early Judaism and early Christianity, a term coined by H.L. Ginsberg and analyzed for instance by Martin Hengel, *The Zealots: Investigations into the Jewish Freedom Movement in the Period from Herod I until 70 A.D.* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1989), 234–235, Gerhard Dautzenberg, *Urchristliche Prophetie: Ihre Erforschung, ihre Voraussetzungen im Judentum und ihre Struktur im ersten Korintherbrief* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1975), 43–121, or David Aune, “Charismatic Exegesis in Early Judaism and Early Christianity,” in *The Pseudepigrapha and Early Biblical Interpretation*, eds. James H. Charlesworth and Craig A. Evans (Sheffield: Sheffield University Press, 1993), 126–150. For synonymous terms, see “inspired eschatological exposition” (E.E. Ellis, *Prophecy and Hermeneutic in Early Christianity* [Tübingen: Mohr, 1978], 26) and “spiritual exegesis,” “exégèse spirituelle” (Lucien Cerfaux, “L’exégèse de l’Ancien Testament par le Nouveau Testament,” in *L’Ancien Testament et les Chrétiens*, ed. Paul Auvrey [Paris: Cerf, 1951], 138). Aune even points out four key notes of the charismatic exegesis: “(1) it is a *commentary*, (2) it is *inspired*, (3) it has an *eschatological* orientation, and (4) it was a prevalent type of *prophecy* during the Second Temple period” (Aune, “Charismatic Exegesis,” 127). However, Aune also emphasizes some weak points of the phrase “charismatic exegesis:” it is vague and an “infelicitous umbrella term used to designate a wide variety of claims that share the common conviction that the interpretation of sacred or revealed texts carries divine authority” (Aune, “Charismatic Exegesis,” 126). Keeping in mind the specific differences, these ideas are incarnated in such inspired persons as Enoch, Daniel, Ezra, Ben Sira, the Teacher of Righteousness, Paul, and Melito.

needed ascension to reach the heavenly realm of divine mysteries, paschal authors need primarily an initiation into divine mysteries now located on earth. Employing apocalyptic, sapiential, and mystery schemes, they design an epistemology of the divine in the hermeneutical context of interpreting the theophany of Exodus 12.

### 1. DANIEL AS INTERPRETER OF DIVINE MYSTERIES

According to one of Martha Himmelfarb's observations, the category of ascension involves an emblematic turn from prophetic to apocalyptic narrative. Unlike the prophets, who receive the divine vision within a terrestrial environment, apocalyptic seers ascend to the heavenly temple: "Ezekiel is the only one of all the classical prophets to record the experience of being physically transported by the spirit of God, but even Ezekiel does not ascend to heaven."<sup>7</sup> The discussion begins with this observation regarding the main distinction between prophetic and apocalyptic visions in terms of geography of the sacred and methods of accessing the sacred center. Since the temple where God resides is in heaven, apocalyptic visionaries have to ascend to the heavenly shrine. From an epistemological perspective, scholars have also noticed that the specific difference between apocalyptic and prophetic writings lies in the emphasis on the revelation of divine mysteries. Christopher Rowland, for instance, affirms: "To speak of apocalyptic, therefore, is to concentrate on the theme of the direct communication of the heavenly mysteries in all their diversity."<sup>8</sup> Likewise, Markus Bockmuehl pointed out

[the] extraordinary apocalyptic interest in divine "mysteries" and their revelation. For these writers "mysteries" subsist in heaven at present but a glimpse of their reality and relevance can be disclosed to select visionaries who pass on this information to the faithful few (the "wise," i.e., the righteous) to encourage them in waiting for the impending deliverance (*1 En* 1:1–9, 37:1–5, etc). At present the divine wisdom is known only through such revealed mysteries, since her abode is in heaven (*1 En* 42:1–3; 48:1; 49:1 f.). Old Testament

<sup>7</sup> Himmelfarb, "From Prophecy to Apocalypse: The Book of the Watchers and Tours of Heaven," in *Jewish Spirituality: From the Bible through the Middle Ages*, ed. Arthur Green (New York: Crossroad, 1986), 145–170, esp. 150. Isaiah, for instance (see *Isa* 6:1–3), receives the divine revelation within the earthly temple of Jerusalem. Cf. John J. Collins, *Apocalypticism in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (New York: Routledge, 1998), 130.

<sup>8</sup> Rowland, *The Open Heaven: A Study of Apocalyptic in Judaism and Early Christianity* (London: SPCK, 1982), 14. See also C. Rowland, *Christian Origins* (London: SPCK, 1985), 64.

antecedents notwithstanding, this notion of heavenly mysteries appears to have become popular only in the wake of early apocalyptic documents like Daniel and *1 Enoch*.<sup>9</sup>

Similarly, George W.E. Nickelsburg defends the idea that the unveiling of secrets is the distinctive note of apocalyptic literature:

Moreover, the content of what is actually revealed is what is otherwise hidden, either because it describes the inaccessible parts of the cosmos and heaven, or because it lies in the future. Thus, on all counts, *1 Enoch* presents information, identifies it as revealing or unveiling of secrets, and emphasizes the process of revelation. Although there are many parallels between this process and the biblical prophetic corpus, I believe that the pervasive emphasis on not simply making known, but on the previous hiddenness of what is now uncovered warrants the use of the term “apocalyptic” or revelatory as a means of distinguishing it from early prophecy.<sup>10</sup>

In the framework of this new epistemological perspective, Daniel appears as a key figure which makes the passage from prophecy to apocalypticism. He is an inspired prophet, a wise man and an astute interpreter. Like the apocalyptic seers, Daniel is a revealer of heavenly mysteries; yet, unlike them, he does not ascend to heaven. To this point, David Aune offers the following observation regarding the connection between the revelation of mysteries and interpretation in Dan 2:30:

Three important terms, רז (“mystery”), גלה (“disclose,” “reveal”) and פשר (“interpretation”) occur together in Dan 2:30, where Daniel, after telling the king that the future has been revealed to him in a dream by “the revealer of mysteries (MT: גלגל רזיא; LXX: ὁ ἀνακαλύπτων μυστήρια),” that is, God, explains (NRSV):

But as for me, this mystery (MT: רזיא; LXX: τὸ μυστήριον) has not been revealed (MT: גלגל; LXX: ἐξέφάνθη) to me because of any wisdom that I have more than any other living being, but in order that the interpretation (MT:

<sup>9</sup> Bockmuehl, *Revelation and Mystery*, 31.

<sup>10</sup> George W.E. Nickelsburg, “‘Enoch’ as Scientist, Sage, and Prophet: Content, Function, and Authorship in *1 Enoch*,” *SBLSP* 38 (1999): 203–230, esp. 221. Nickelsburg, while criticizing Handson’s appreciation that the Third Isaiah should be viewed as an “apocalyptic eschatology” (Handson, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*), also affirms on page 214: “Here is one of the problems of describing Third Isaiah as ‘apocalyptic eschatology.’ What Third Isaiah’s eschatology lacks is precisely the apocalypse, the revealed and interpreted vision that is the literary essence of Enoch’s account.” For further bibliography on the Enochic tradition, some good starting points are, for example, James VanderKam, *Enoch, a Man for All Generations* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1995); George W.E. Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch: A Commentary on the Book of 1 Enoch*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2001); Orlov, *Enoch-Metatron Tradition*; Loren T. Stuckenbruck, *1 Enoch 91–108* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2007).



פֶּשֶׁרָא; LXX: τοῦ δὲ λωθῆναι) may be known to the king and that you may understand thoughts of your mind.<sup>11</sup>

In addition, Aune affirms that, unlike Joseph, who in Genesis 40–41 asks the receivers of the dream to relate the dream in order to offer them his interpretation, Daniel “knows *both* the dream and its interpretation (Dan 2:17–45), a feature that suggests the close connection between charismatic exegesis and prophecy.”<sup>12</sup> Aune also extends his observations to the Qumran method of interpretation:

The terms רז (‘mystery’) and פֶּשֶׁר (‘interpretation’) are used in similar ways in both Daniel and the Qumran pesharim, and it appears that there is more similarity between the methods of exegesis in Daniel and the pesharim than between the pesharim and later rabbinical midrashim.<sup>13</sup>

Lastly, Aune observes that the Dead Sea documents portray the Teacher of Righteousness in a similar way as a scribe who interprets the mysteries of the prophets. He is “the Priest [in whose heart] God set [understanding] that he might interpret (לִפְשׁוֹר) all the words of His servants the prophets.”<sup>14</sup> Likewise, “as for that which He said, *That he who reads may read it speedily*: interpreted (פֶּשֶׁר) this concerns the Teacher of Righteousness, to whom God made known (הוֹדִיעוּ) all the mysteries (רִזִּי) of His servants the Prophets.”<sup>15</sup>

## 2. ENOCH AS DIVINE SCRIBE AND REVEALER OF HEAVENLY MYSTERIES

George Nickelsburg indicates a new dissimilarity between the prophet and the apocalyptic visionary. The apocalyptic visionary is not only a prophet, but also a prophet, scribe, and sage, a character incorporating the highest virtues ever mentioned in the prophetic and sapiential literature. Enoch, for example, concentrates in one individual the highest titles of the inspired person, prophet, scribe, and sage:

“Enoch” is three times called a “scribe” (12:4 [cf. 13:4–7]; 15:1; 92:1). Three times the Epistle refers to the religious leaders as “the wise” (98:9; 99:10; 104:12–105:1) reflecting the term *hakkim* of *maskil*. ... Consonant with this observation is

<sup>11</sup> Aune, “Charismatic Exegesis,” 132.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> 1QpHab 2:8–9, in Geza Vermes, *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English* (London: Penguin Books, 1997), 497.

<sup>15</sup> 1QpHab 7:1–5. Trans. Vermes, 481.

the frequent occurrence in 1 Enoch of literary forms typical of the prophets: an oracle, chaps. 1–5; a commissioning, chaps. 14–16; woes and descriptions of the future in the Epistle, *passim*. This evidence indicates an interesting mixture of roles.<sup>16</sup>

The content of the mysteries revealed to Enoch covers a large variety spanning from the mysteries of the temple to the mysteries of creation and from the mysteries of history to those concerning human destiny. According to the text, all human knowledge is the product of a series of revelations. One of the earliest parts of 1 Enoch, the *Astronomical Book* (sometimes titled the *Book of the Luminaries*, namely, 1 Enoch 72–82), shows that the revealed message was preserved from one generation to the other: the angel Uriel unveiled the secrets to Enoch, then Enoch to his son Methuselah, and finally Methuselah to his brothers and descendants. The passage reads,

At that time Uriel the angel responded to me: “Enoch, I have now shown you everything, and I have revealed everything to you so that you may see this sun and this moon and those who lead the stars of the sky and all those who turn them—their work, their times, and their emergences.” ... He said to me: “Enoch, look at the heavenly tablets, read what is written on them, and understand each and every item.” I looked at all the heavenly tablets, read everything that was written, and understood everything. I read the book of all the actions of people and of all humans who will be on the earth for the generations of the world.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Nickelsburg, “‘Enoch’ as Scientist,” 225. See also John Collins’s consonant affirmation: “the figures to whom the major apocalypses are ascribed, Enoch, Daniel, Ezra, Baruch, are sages or scribes” (“The Sage in the Apocalyptic and Pseudepigraphic Literature,” *Seers, Sybils and Sages in Hellenistic-Roman Judaism* [Leiden: Brill, 1997], 339–350). There are contemporary scholars who do not agree with a sharp distinction between prophecy and apocalyptic, such as Lester L. Grabbe. As Grabbe states: “From a form critical perspective many of the old prophetic forms do tend to change or die out, and a new genre of apocalypses arises; however, apocalyptic is not by any means confined to formal apocalypses. In my opinion the sharp distinction between prophesy and apocalyptic is unjustified. For example, there is no reason why the prophetic book of Zechariah 1–8 cannot also be classified as an apocalypse. Indeed, I would rather see apocalyptic as a sub-genre of prophecy than a separate entity.” See Grabbe, “Poets, Scribes, or Preachers? The Reality of Prophecy in the Second Temple Period,” *SBLSP* 37 (1998): 524–545. Nonetheless, Grabbe does not offer any other criteria than social ones (e.g., theological, doctrinal, symbolic, cultural, or of any other nature), and confines the whole discussion on the border between prophetic and apocalyptic writings to “a social context and to social reality” (Grabbe, “Poets,” 528). He even advances the following principle: “This is enormously significant for purposes of our discussion: *the prophetic writings and the apocalyptic and relating writings are all scribal works in their present form* and thus present a similar problem when it comes to relating them to their social context” (Grabbe, “Poets,” 529).

<sup>17</sup> See 1 En. 80:1 and 81:1–2.

Afterwards, Enoch transmitted the mysteries to his son:

Now my son Methuselah, I am telling you all these things and am writing (them) down. I have revealed all of them to you and have given you the books about all these things, My son, keep the book written by your father so that you may give (it) to the generations of the world.<sup>18</sup>

In his turn, Methuselah conveys the disclosed heavenly things to the other sons of Enoch and to all the other generations. As a result, the process of revelation, in all its steps, is accompanied by a process of reading and writing, which obviously emphasizes Enoch's scribal status and mission. It appears that the depiction of Enoch as a scribe constituted a significant trend of ancient Judaism, as *Jubilees* 4:17–24, the recension B of the *Testament of Abraham* 10–11, and *2 Enoch* 22 portray him in this way.<sup>19</sup> Moreover, the nature of Enoch's mission is very lofty, even angelic, since *1 Enoch* 33–34, 72:1, and 81:1–2 depict the protagonist writing down all the things disclosed to him and interchanging this mission with the angel Uriel. Likewise, *1 En.* 10:8 portrays the angel Raphael as authoring these divine writings. As Leslie Baynes ponders, heavenly writing was the attribute of Yahweh or of his angels in ancient Judaism.<sup>20</sup>

A new insight into Enoch's scribal attributes will come out while scrutinizing the idea of celestial book. In fact, the entire content of the heavenly books is a matter of divine secret, mystery, and wisdom. Nickelsburg shows

<sup>18</sup> See *1 En.* 82:1.

<sup>19</sup> See, for example, Leslie Baynes, "Enoch, the Angels, and Heavenly Books," *SBLSP* 45 (2006): 1. For the scribal contexts of ancient Israel, see also Meir Bar-Ilan, "Writing in Ancient Israel and Early Judaism: Scribes and Books in the Late Second Commonwealth and Rabbinic Period," in *Mikra: Text, Translation, Reading and Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Ancient Judaism in Early Christianity*, ed. Martin J. Mulder and Harry Sysling, *CRINT* 2.1 (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1989), 21–38; Joseph Blenkinsopp, "The Sage, the Scribe, and Scribalism in the Chronicler's Work," in *The Sage in Israel and the Ancient Near East*, 307–315; Collins, "The Sage in Apocalyptic," Loren R. Mack-Fisher, "The Scribe (and Sage) in the Royal Court at Ugarit," in *The Sage in Israel and the Ancient Near East*, 109–115; David E. Orton, *The Understanding Scribe: Matthew and the Apocalyptic Ideal*, *JSNTSup* 25 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989); Anthony Saldarini, *Pharisees, Scribes and Sadducees* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1989); Christine Schams, *Jewish Scribes in the Second-Temple Period*, *JSOTSS* 291 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998); Ephraim E. Urbach, *The Halakha, Its Sources and Development* (Yad La-Talmud; Jerusalem: Massada, 1906).

<sup>20</sup> Baynes, "Enoch," 4: "As we progress from a survey of the earliest to the later examples of heavenly writing, however, we observe that it moves into the hands of angels or other heavenly beings [from the hands of Yahweh, e.g., *Exod* 32:32–33, *Ps* 69:28, *Ps* 139:16, *Zach* 5:1–5] particularly but not exclusively in apocalypses. This is not a surprising development since, as a rule, the figure of God recedes in this genre, and angels emerge as God's primary agents."

that the verb used for “revelation” in *1 Enoch* 82 is *kašatku* = ἀποκαλύπτω = אָפֵּל.<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, Nickelsburg links the expressions “to give books” and “to give wisdom,” where the latter is a technical term for the transmission of eschatological revelation, as it can be seen in *1 En.* 5:8–9: “wisdom will be given to all the chosen; and they will all live.”<sup>22</sup>

Another key element of the narrative concerns the degree or quality of the secrets or mysteries into which Enoch has been allowed to participate; the mysteries revealed to Enoch are among the highest.<sup>23</sup> The author of the *Book of the Watchers*, again one of the earliest materials of the first Enochic corpus, emphatically portrays Enoch as a divine messenger to the fallen watchers. The author conveys the following message about the quality of the mysteries they know: “You were in heaven, and no mystery was revealed to you; but a stolen mystery you learned.”<sup>24</sup> Focusing on the aforementioned phrase “stolen mystery,” Nickelsburg suggests that the original Greek translation from the Hebrew was μυστήριον ἐξουθενημένον, a “worthless or despised mystery,” which concurs with the Ethiopic version: *menuna meštira*. The latest book of the corpus—the *Book of Parables*—offers a comprehensive list of the mysteries Enoch had access to: the division of the heavenly kingdom and the knowledge of the eschatological places of judgment (*1 En.* 41:1); the secrets of lightning, thunder, winds, clouds, dew, sun, and moon (*1 En.* 41:3–8); luminaries and their laws (*1 Enoch* 49); and the hidden things about the Son of Man (*1 Enoch* 46).<sup>25</sup>

Besides the visionary dimension, Enoch’s scribal traits remain emblematic. As will be shown, he is a heavenly scribe and a revealer of truth through the method of interpreting the intricate and obscure parables and signs God reveals to the human being. In this context, the sacred text plays a central role and the mediator is an inspired interpreter. One may observe that the apocalyptic idea of mystery involved a change in the epistemology of the divine and the conception of the inspired mediator. With the apocalyptic

<sup>21</sup> Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch: A Commentary*, 342.

<sup>22</sup> Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch*, 342.

<sup>23</sup> For a refined analysis of the various degrees of mysteries in *1 Enoch*, see L.T. Stuckenbruck, “4QInstruction and the Possible Influence of Early Enochic Traditions: An Evaluation,” in *The Wisdom Texts from Qumran and the Development of Sapiential Thought*, ed. C. Hempel, A. Lange and H. Lichtenberger (Leuven: University Press, 2002), 245–261, esp. 260.

<sup>24</sup> *1 En.* 16:3.

<sup>25</sup> For analysis, see David W. Suter, *Tradition and Composition in the Parables of Enoch*, SBLDS 47 (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1979); cf. Gabriele Boccaccini, ed., *Enoch and the Messiah Son of Man: Revisiting the Book of Parables* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007).

literature, the mediator has to be first initiated into divine mysteries, and only acquiring this condition he/she can become a revealer of divine mysteries and a sacred interpreter.

### 3. PASCHAL WRITERS AS REVEALERS OF DIVINE AND HEAVENLY MYSTERIES

One of the main divine secrets—if not the most important—of both *1 Enoch*, in the *Book of Similitudes*, and early paschal documents is the enigmatic figure of the Son of Man (or the Logos-Christ). Between these sources, there are a few commonly shared elements in terms of discursive strategy. The first of these shared elements found within the texts of Enoch, Melito, Pseudo-Hippolytus, and Origen notes that these are not actually the real sources of the divine message but merely human interpreters. It is the Son of Man, or the Logos, which are in fact divine figures and function as the real sources of revelation and wisdom. A sentence from *1 Enoch* illustrates this point: “All the treasuries of what is hidden he [i.e., the Son of Man] will reveal.”<sup>26</sup> Second, Enoch and the paschal authors, as human interpreters, play the mediating role of receptacles of revelation, of decoders of encrypted messages, and, thus, of illumined interpreters and scribes. Third, there is a connection between the terms of “mystery” and revealed “truth.” These two terms, whether synonymous or not, are disclosed through deciphering parables. Finally, the Son of Man and the Logos are soteriological figures. In other words, they possess soteriological powers and the power of judgment.<sup>27</sup>

Turning our attention to Melito’s vision, every mystery ultimately is a mystery of the Lord (τὸ τοῦ κυρίου μυστήριον). This is particularly evident, since the Lord *is* all things (ὅς ἐστιν τὰ πάντα): law, Word, grace, Father, Son, sheep, man, God, and Pascha.<sup>28</sup> Unlike Enoch, the paschal authors do not disclose cosmological and astronomical mysteries but the mystery of the

<sup>26</sup> *1 En.* 46:3.

<sup>27</sup> According to James VanderKam, the two major sources of this theme in *1 Enoch* are Second Isaiah (Isa 41:8, 9; 42:1; 43:10, 20; 44:1, 2; 45:41; 49:7) and Daniel 7, while the title “the anointed one” from *1 En.* 48:10 derives from Ps 2:2. Regarding the function of eschatological judge, VanderKam supposes that this is the innovation of *1 Enoch*, since “neither the servant nor the son of man has that function in Scripture,” although he agrees that the author of *1 Enoch* has taken from Daniel 7 the image of the judgment scene present in *1 En.* 55:1–4; see James VanderKam, “Biblical Interpretation in *1 Enoch* and Jubilees,” in *The Pseudepigrapha and Early Biblical Interpretation*, ed. J.H. Charlesworth and C.A. Evans (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), 96–125, esp. 116.

<sup>28</sup> *PP* 9:54–65.

divine economy, the mystery of the incarnate Lord. The centrality of the mystery of the incarnation organizes the whole history of humankind and the history of salvation as well. The history of humankind and the history of salvation are essential theological categories not only for the paschal authors but for the whole late Second Temple tradition of the Son of Man (of course, this excludes the idea of the incarnation).

In the *Book of Similitudes*, the highest mystery revealed to Enoch is not that of a cosmic element and of its heavenly sources but that of the vision of the Head of Days and of his chosen one, the Son of Man.<sup>29</sup> Bockmuehl points out a key attribute of the Son of Man: “*1 Enoch* frequently features the conviction that the Messiah/Son of Man is already present and hidden with God since the beginning of the world, in order to be revealed in the eschaton (*1 En.* 38:2, 48:2–7, 62:6 f., 69:26–29).”<sup>30</sup> Similar descriptions of the Son of Man or a savior hidden from eternity may also be encountered in *4 Ezra*, *2 Baruch*, and other Jewish documents of Late Antiquity.<sup>31</sup> Bockmuehl observes that the same idea is present in Col 1:24–2:5, a source portraying Jesus as the Messiah, the hidden secret from all the ages, and the one who encapsulates all mysteries:

[T]hat secret purpose hidden for long ages (τὸ μυστήριον τὸ ἀποκεκρυμμένον ἀπὸ τῶν αἰώνων) and through many generations, but now disclosed (νῦν δὲ ἐφανερώθη) to God’s people. To them he chose to make known what a wealth of glory is offered to the Gentiles in this secret purpose: Christ in you, the hope of glory.<sup>32</sup>

My aim is to keep them [Laodiceans] in good heart and united in love, so that they may come to the full wealth of conviction which understanding brings, and grasp God’s secret, which is Christ himself (τοῦ μυστηρίου τοῦ θεοῦ, Χριστοῦ), in whom lie hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (ἐν ᾧ εἰσιν πάντες οἱ θησαυροὶ τῆς σοφίας καὶ γνώσεως ἀπόκρυφοί).<sup>33</sup>

The idea of a secret Son of Man should be dated around, or after, the production of the *Book of Similitudes*, in which the Son of Man figure appears for the first time. Most scholars place this authorship at the turn of the era.

<sup>29</sup> *1 En.* 46, 48, 61–62 and 68–70; cf. J.C. VanderKam, “Righteous One, Messiah, Chosen One, and Son of Man in *1 Enoch* 37–71,” in *The Messiah: Developments in Earliest Judaism and Christianity*, ed. James H. Charlesworth (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 169–191.

<sup>30</sup> Bockmuehl, *Revelation*, 37. See, for example, *1 En.* 48:6: “For this reason he was chosen and hidden in his presence before the world was created and forever. And the wisdom of the Lord of Spirits has revealed him to the holy and the righteous.”

<sup>31</sup> Bockmuehl, *Revelation*, 38.

<sup>32</sup> Col 1:26–27.

<sup>33</sup> Col 2:2–3. Cf. Bockmuehl, *Revelation*, 178–193.

Differing from this perspective, Melito portrays Christ as the Logos and the divine agent who planned the mystery of his sacrifice *in illo tempore*, manifested it as a pre-figuration in the law and prophets, and revealed its truth in his own sacrifice:

Understand therefore, beloved, how it is new and old, eternal and temporary, perishable and imperishable, mortal and immortal, this mystery of the Pascha (τὸ τοῦ πάσχα μυστήριον): old as regards the word; temporary as regards the model, eternal because of the grace ...<sup>34</sup>

[T]he mystery of the Lord, having prefigured well in advance (ἐκ μακροῦ προτυπωθέν) and having been seen through a model (διὰ τύπον ὄραθέν), is today believed in now that it is fulfilled (σήμερον πίστεως τυγχάνει τετελεσμένον).<sup>35</sup>

Finally, for Pseudo-Hippolytus, Christians have to become initiated into old and new things with a sacred knowledge (οἱ τὰ καινὰ καὶ παλαιὰ μετὰ γνώσεως ἱεράς μεμνημένοι) in order to be nurtured from, and participate in, the Logos.<sup>36</sup>

It is worth noting that such mediating characters as Daniel, Enoch, Ben Sira, Ezra, Baruch, Paul, and several paschal authors have similar functions in the course of revelation. These historical characters, or their authors, are not the primary source of revelation—that divine treasury from which mystery first springs out—but mediators of the revelation to a certain human community. Rather, they are inspired translators of an encrypted sacred information.

There are, however, some differences in the way they access the divine mystery. Although Enoch and Paul share the same apocalyptic method of acquiring the divine revelation (i.e., ascension and vision), paschal authors do not emphasize ascension but usually understand it as the eschatological event in which Christ himself will raise all humankind, forever, to the celestial habitation of the Father. In spite of the fact that paschal authors share the mystery-scribal epistemology with Daniel, Enoch, and Paul, they remain first and foremost sages and scribes initiated in Christ's mysteries revealed on earth rather than visionaries transported to heaven. In this way, they resemble more the inspired scribe Ben Sira than Enoch or Ezra of the Greek apocalypse (who experiences ascension), or Ezra of the Syriac version and Baruch of the Second Book (who receives visions in their dreams).

<sup>34</sup> *PP* 2–3,6–19.

<sup>35</sup> *PP* 58.405–408.

<sup>36</sup> *IP* 4.1–2.

The highest mystery which most of these revealers disclose is that of the hidden Messiah, the Christ, the Son of Man, and of his saving manifestation. There is, however, a significant distinction among these documents. While *1 Enoch*, *4 Ezra*, and *2 Baruch* connect the mystery of the hidden Son of Man with the eschaton and an expected manifestation in the future, Paul and the paschal writers connect it with the historical manifestation of the economy of salvation. Concerning the history of salvation, their first aim was to discover its mystery and true meaning, to describe it properly, and persuade their audience to discover likewise its mystery, its meaning, and reality.<sup>37</sup> The mystery remains new, divine, and heavenly for each new initiate:

As then with the perishable examples (*παραδείγμασιν*, i.e., the types of the Old Testament) so also with the imperishable things [their fulfillment in Christ]; as with the earthly things, so also with the heavenly. For the very salvation and reality (*ἀλήθεια*) of the Lord were prefigured in the people, and the decrees of the gospel were proclaimed in advance by the law.<sup>38</sup>

As a provisory conclusion, Paul and the paschal writers are new mediators of divine mysteries in the tradition of heavenly mysteries inaugurated with Daniel and Enoch. Perhaps inspired by Paul's typological exegesis, paschal authors applied typology to the mystery of Pascha—describing it through mystery vocabulary and the method of typology—and envisioned the entire history of salvation through the lens of this mystery.

#### 4. PASCHAL AUTHORS AS SAGES, SCRIBES, AND “PROPHETS”

One of the distinctive attributes of the scribe and sage is the accurate interpretation of revelation. Such an interpretation can be seen in and through the process Daniel used to offer the correct interpretation of dreams. Based on W. Baumgartner's investigation, Nickelsburg compares Enoch and Ben Sira, affirming they both enjoy “somewhat the same roles.”<sup>39</sup> Along with the roles of scribe and sage, Ben Sira assumes a prophetic task:

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<sup>37</sup> Cf. e.g., *1 En.* 1:4–5: “The Great Holy One will come forth from his dwelling, and the eternal God will tread from thence upon Mount Sinai. He will appear with his army, he will appear with his mighty host from the heaven of heavens.”

<sup>38</sup> *PP* 39.

<sup>39</sup> Nickelsburg, “‘Enoch’ as Scientist,” 226. For W. Baumgarten, see “Die literarischen Gattungen in der Weisheit des Jesus Sirach,” *ZAW* 34 (1914): 165–198.



As a sage, he [ben Sirah] is an interpreter of the heavenly wisdom embodied in the Torah. ... Thus it is not by accident that he describes himself as a channel for wisdom's life-giving water, as one who "pours forth teaching like prophecy" (24:33).<sup>40</sup>

Nickelsburg concludes his comparison by adding this new insight: "[T]he figure of the sage or scribe emerges in both texts [*1 Enoch* and Ben Sirah] as a teacher of Torah who speaks with the inspiration of the prophets."<sup>41</sup>

The figure of the sage full of wisdom, inspired scribe, and prophet also matches our paschal authors or, at least, Melito. According to some ancient sources, the bishop of Sardis was a prophet and inspired person. To this point, Jerome testifies that Tertullian—although noticeably envying Melito's elegant style and rhetorical talent—showed that many Christians of antiquity viewed the Sardisian as a prophet. Jerome explained: "Tertullian, in the seven books which he wrote against the church in favor of Montanus, derides his [Melito's] elegant and declamatory style, saying that he was thought of as a prophet by most of us Christians."<sup>42</sup> Similarly, Eusebius lists Melito among the "great luminaries" of Asia and portrays him as "the eunuch, who lived entirely in the Holy Spirit, who lies in Sardis, waiting for the visitation from heaven when he shall rise from the dead."<sup>43</sup>

Following the same line of thought, it is also true that Melito's text often betrays prophetic tones, especially in his anti-Jewish polemics in which the reproaches he addresses to Israel are set in the form of a direct dialog between him and the people of Israel in a way similar to that of the classical prophetic oracles:<sup>44</sup>

What strange crime, Israel, have you committed? You dishonored him that honored you. ... What have you done, Israel? ... And you killed your Lord at

<sup>40</sup> Nickelsburg, "Enoch' as Scientist," 226.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 227.

<sup>42</sup> Jerome, *Vir. ill.* 24.3, in *Saint Jerome: On Illustrious Men*, trans. T.P. Halton (Washington, DC: CUA Press, 1999), 46–47.

<sup>43</sup> Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* 5.24.5, in *The Ecclesiastical History*, 2 vols., trans. K. Lake, LCL (Cambridge, MA: William Heinemann, 1965), 1:507.

<sup>44</sup> For Melito's anti-Jewish polemics and general Christian-Jewish rivalries in Sardis, see David Satran, "Anti-Jewish Polemic in the *Peri Pascha* of Melito of Sardis: The Problem of Social Context," in Ora Limor and Guy G. Stroumsa, eds., *Contra Iudaeos: Ancient and Medieval Polemics between Christians and Jews* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996), 49–58; Lynn H. Cohick, *The Peri Pascha Attributed to Melito of Sardis: Setting, Purpose, and Sources* (Providence: Brown Judaic Studies, 2000); and Richard S. Ascough, ed., *Religious Rivalries and the Struggle for Success in Sardis and Smyrna* (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2005).

the great feast. ... O lawless Israel, what is this unprecedented crime you committed, thrusting your Lord among unprecedented sufferings, your Sovereign, who formed you, who made you ... who tinted the light, who lit up the day, who divided off the darkness, who fixed the first marker, who hung the earth, who controlled the deep, who spread out the firmament, who arrayed the world, who fitted the stars in heaven, who lit up the luminaries, who made the angels in heaven, who established the thrones there, who formed man upon earth. It was he who chose you and guided you from Adam to Noah, from Noah to Abraham, from Abraham to Isaac and Jacob and the twelve patriarchs. It was he who guided you into Egypt, and watched over you and there sustained you. It was he who lit your way with a pillar and sheltered you with a cloud, who cut the Red Sea and led you through and destroyed your enemy ....<sup>45</sup>

In his polemics, the Sardisian assumes prophetic tones, and his rhetorical genre echoes classical prophetic passages.<sup>46</sup>

In fact, in his discursive scenario, Melito plays the role of the revealer of mysteries. One should recall as well Melito's aforementioned claim to reveal the deepest mysteries of history and divine economy. In particular, the works of Christ through the Old and New Testaments illustrate Melito's position.<sup>47</sup> At the same time, assuming the scribal role of inspired interpreter, he is a revealer who undertakes this task through interpreting Scripture.

Several prophet-like features can be encountered even in Origen's work, as articulated in K.J. Torjensen's 2003 article "The Alexandrian Tradition of the Inspired Interpreter."<sup>48</sup> This study is of considerable help for the present investigation, since the author argues here that the Alexandrian interpreter assumes, in fact, a prophetic function. Through the study of Scripture, the

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<sup>45</sup> See *PP* 73–93. The passage was most likely part of the Jewish-Christian polemic of the time; see also some of the apologists who wrote treatises usually entitled *Against the Jews*, such as Apollinaris and Miltiades; see, for instance, Robert S. MacLennan, "Christian Self-Definition in the *Adversus Judaeos* Preachers in the Second Century," in *Diaspora, Jews, and Judaism: Essays in Honor of, and in Dialogue with, A. Thomas Kraabel*, ed. J. Andrew Overman and Robert S. MacLennan (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992), 209–224.

<sup>46</sup> E.g., Amos 3:1: "Listen, Israelites, to these words that the Lord addresses to you, to the whole nation which he brought up from Egypt;" Amos 5:1: "Listen, Israel, to these words, the dirge I raise over you;" Mic 3:8–10: "But I am full of strength, of justice and power, to declare to Jacob his crime, to Israel his sin. Listen to this leaders of Jacob, you rulers of Israel, who abhor what is right and pervert what is straight, building Zion with bloodshed, Jerusalem with iniquity."

<sup>47</sup> Bucur phrases Melito's exegesis as "rewritten Bible" and "christological typology;" cf. "Exegesis of Biblical Theophanies in Byzantine Hymnography: Rewritten Bible?" *TS* 68 (2007): 92–112. See also the next chapter.

<sup>48</sup> See K.J. Torjensen, "The Alexandrian Tradition of the Inspired Interpreter," in *Origeniana Octava*, ed. Lorenzo Perrone (Leuven: Peeters, 2003), 287–299.

interpreter becomes a visionary of the things divine and able to mediate or disclose divine knowledge. Torjensen further explains this attitude:

Origen, as exegete, has penetrated the divine mysteries of Scripture, because he has lived the life of a prophet, the holy life. Like the prophets he has undergone, experienced and exemplified the transformative process created by knowledge of the divine.<sup>49</sup>

#### 5. ENOCH AND THE EARLY PASCHAL AUTHORS AS INTERPRETERS, DECODERS OF PARABLES, AND REVEALERS OF THE TRUTH

The method of unveiling divine mysteries is undertaken through the exegetical process in which paschal interpreters decipher the parables and hidden meanings of the ancient scriptures. They play the role of the inspired scribe involved in a divine exegesis taking place in the liturgical context of the paschal celebration, following immediately after the reading of Exodus 12 and, essentially, interpreting this passage. Melito's homily begins with the clear statement, "The scripture from the Hebrew Exodus has been read and the words of the mystery have been plainly stated."<sup>50</sup> At first glance, the passage following this affirmation appears to be a short summary of the story of Exodus. And yet, Melito expounds in *Peri Pascha* 1–10 the thesis that the whole story is a mystery, old and new, in which the Logos-Christ was and still remains present, and he concludes in *Peri Pascha* 11 with the words: "This is the mystery of the Pascha just as it is written in the law, as it has just now been read." Melito continues afterwards, as he announced, by relating (διηγῆσαι) the words of scripture and its mystery in which he emphasizes the presence of the Lord:

It is clear that your respect [the angel of death who slaughtered the first-born of Egypt] was won (δυσωπηθείς) when you saw the mystery of the Lord occurring in the sheep, the life of the Lord in the slaughter of the lamb, the model (τύπον) of the Lord in the death of the sheep.<sup>51</sup>

At this point, in *Peri Pascha* 35, Melito introduces technical, exegetical terminology such as τύπος (type), τὸ λεγόμενον (that what is said/the text), τὸ γινόμενον (that what is done/the event), παραβολή (parable/comparison), and προκέντημα (project/preliminary sketch) along with the following exegetical theory:

<sup>49</sup> Torjensen, "Alexandrian Tradition," 295.

<sup>50</sup> *PP* 1.1.

<sup>51</sup> *PP* 33.

What is said (τὸ λεγόμενον) and done (γινόμενον) is nothing, beloved, without a comparison (παραβολῆς) and preliminary sketch (προκεντήματος). Whatever is said and done finds its comparison—what is said a comparison, what is done a prefiguration (προτυπώσεως)—in order that, just as what is done is demonstrated through the prefiguration, so also what is spoken (τὸ λαλούμενου) may be elucidated through the comparison.<sup>52</sup>

Hence, according to Melito, the Old Testament is a set of things either verbally articulated or practically accomplished (“said and done”) which encapsulate mysteries.<sup>53</sup> They have to be interpreted and their interpretation represents the linguistic expression of the mysterious, hidden things. These mysteries may either refer to already existing realities, such as the Son of Man hidden from the ages, or denote such future things as the end of the world and the reality of the world to come. Consequently, there are three levels of discussion: first, mysteries (τὰ μυστήρια), the things done; second, parables, the things said; and third, the interpretation (ἐρμηνεία) of parables, an enterprise which discloses the hidden sense of mysteries. Interpretation illumines both mysteries and parables, the old events and spoken words which are the primary levels of reality where God manifested his divine actions and messages. In addition, God continues his manifestation while inspiring the interpreter in the hermeneutical endeavor.

Accordingly, elucidating the parables and the intricate and obscure places of scripture defines the key preoccupation of the scribe. Since Melito’s primary activity consists of elucidating parables, his main function can be associated with scribal activity.<sup>54</sup> Unlike Enoch, Ezra, and Baruch (who receive the interpretation through the mediation of an angel), Ben Sira, the

<sup>52</sup> PP 35.

<sup>53</sup> See also PP 40.262: “the law was the writing of a parable” (ὁ νόμος γραφή παραβολῆς). Yet, Clement of Alexandria will maintain (see *Str.* 5.25.1) that the entire Scripture has been written in parables. Melito’s technique of typology may be seen as an important example and witness to the Christian theology of typological interpretation, the roots of which may be traced back to the Pauline letters, Justin, and Irenaeus. But Melito elaborates it in a methodical exegetical strategy and uses it in the context of a theory of mystery which includes at least the following three key elements: 1) the exegetical structure type (pre-figuration)-archetype (revealed truth); 2) the Logos performs mysteries in both testaments, and the relationship between these mysteries is that between type and archetype; 3) Melito reveals these mysteries, the hidden works of the Logos.

<sup>54</sup> See, for example, Sir 39:1–3: “How different it is with one who devotes himself to reflecting on the law of the Most High, who explores all the wisdom of the past and occupies himself with the study of prophecies! He preserves the sayings of the famous and penetrates the subtleties of parables. He explores the hidden meaning of proverbs and knows his way among enigmatic parables.”

Teacher of Righteousness, Paul, and Melito offer their own interpretations as inspired sages. Their connection with the divine wisdom, therefore, is unmediated.

Parable terminology is already present in Prov 1:6, Sir 39:2, and the *Book of Parables* from the *Ethiopic Book of Enoch*. As Nickelsburg observes, parables are deeply linked in *1 Enoch* with the ideas of vision and transmission of divine, heavenly wisdom:

[T]he end of the first journey and much of the second journey focuses on what Enoch sees and how, upon his request for information, the visions are interpreted to him. The Book of Parables (chaps. 37–71), which as a whole recasts some of the traditions in chapters 1–36, also begins with repeated emphasis on Enoch’s receipt of wisdom and his present transmission of what he has learned through the words and parables he speaks.<sup>55</sup>

Moreover, one of the central elements of the parable theory resides in the purpose of this exegetical enterprise, namely, the unveiling and manifestation of the “truth” (אמת or ἀλήθεια). In the Hebrew Bible, the concept is already connected with another term of major importance for both Enochic and Melitonian corpora, namely, “righteousness” (צדק or δικαιοσύνη). The two terms seem to be strongly connected with Yahweh’s titles. In Gen 24:27, for instance, Isaac gives thanks to Yahweh for not taking away from him Yahweh’s צדק and אמת. Many other passages such as Gen 32:10 or Pss 85:10, 86:15, and 98:3, link the two terms together, while Exod 34:6 even states that Yahweh is bountiful in righteousness and truth. In other passages, Yahweh makes them manifest (e.g., 2Sam 2:6 and 15:20). To a certain extent, the meanings of the two terms overlap, as one can see in the case of Exod 18:21, where the Hebrew אנשי אמת (literally “men of truth”) was rendered into Greek through ἀνδρας δικαιους (“righteous men”). They are also frequently used in such expressions as “to walk in truth” (1Kgs 2:4, 3:6, and 2Kgs 20:3) and “to walk in righteousness” (1Kgs 3:6). While Ps 89:14 places truth along with mercy (צדק or ἔλεος) before the face (פנים or προσώπον) of Yahweh, Ps 119:142 identifies the Torah and the truth, and Ps 119:151 the Ten Commandments and the truth. Finally, Dan 10:21 concocts the expression “in the Book of Truth” (אמת בכתב אמת or ἐν ἀπογραφῇ ἀληθείας).

*1 En.* 91:4 also uses the expression to “walk in truth” and to “walk in righteousness,” while *1 En.* 92:4 corroborates the notions of “righteousness,” “truth,” and “light.” One of the most ancient parts of the Enochic corpus,

<sup>55</sup> Nickelsburg, “Enoch as Scientist,” 220.

the *Book of the Watchers*, associates with Enoch such titles as “scribe” (12:3; cf. 92:1), “scribe of righteousness” (12:4), and “scribe of truth” (15:1). Nickelsburg offers the following comments on this last title:

Enoch is addressed here as ἄνθρωπος ἀληθινὸς καὶ γραμματεὺς τῆς ἀληθείας. The parallel formulation in 12:4 is ὁ γραμματεὺς τῆς δικαιοσύνης. ... The text in 12:4 almost certainly translates אשׁוּק דִּי סוּפֵר. The Aram. noun אשׁוּק can mean either uprightness/righteousness or truth ... and could therefore be legitimately translated in Greek either as δικαιοσύνη or ἀλήθεια.<sup>56</sup>

Having emphasized the similarity of meaning between truth and righteousness, Nickelsburg proceeds to underline the theological significance of this title—the two virtues open the door to God’s face: “Enoch’s righteousness is relevant here because by virtue of it he was permitted to enter the divine presence.”<sup>57</sup>

In a similar fashion, the concept of truth (ἀλήθεια) is emblematic in early paschal writings. In opposition to the concept of τύπος (the prefiguration or the preliminary sketch pertaining to the time before the incarnation), the truth represents the full manifestation of the divine mystery belonging to the times succeeding the incarnation:

For to each belongs a proper season (or moment: καίρος): a proper time for the model (τοῦ τύπου), a proper time for the material (τῆς ὕλης), a proper time for the reality (τῆς ἀληθείας).<sup>58</sup> ... For the very salvation and reality (ἀλήθεια) of the Lord were prefigured in the people (ἐν τῷ λαῶ), and the decrees of the gospel were proclaimed in advance by the law. The people (λαὸς) then was a model (τύπος) by way of preliminary sketch, and the law (νόμος) was the writing of a parable (γραφὴ παραβολῆς); the gospel is the recounting and fulfillment of the law, and the church is the repository of the reality (τῆς ἀληθείας). The model then was precious before the reality (πρὸ τῆς ἀληθείας), and the parable (παραβολή) was marvelous before the interpretation (πρὸ τῆς ἐρμηνείας).<sup>59</sup>

In a similar fashion, Pseudo-Hippolytus envisions Scripture as an inspired codified text replete of types, symbols, and mysteries (*IP* 2, 6, and 9). The law of Moses—which Pseudo-Hippolytus perceives in very positive terms, and generally his text carries no anti-Jewish detectable polemic—is Christ’s messenger, a school of wisdom, a *didaskaleion* of the world, and a collection

<sup>56</sup> Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch*, 270. Cf. Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch*, 411: “The nouns ‘truth’ (*ret*) and ‘righteousness’ (*sedq*) may well translate the same Aramaic word (אשׁוּק).”

<sup>57</sup> Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch*, 270.

<sup>58</sup> Melito, *PP* 38.241–244. Cf. Pseudo-Hippolytus, *IP* 2.10; 9.11 and 9.37.

<sup>59</sup> Melito, *PP* 39–41.259–266.

of symbols and enigmas of the future grace (τῆς μελλούσης χάριτος συμβολικὴ καὶ αἰνιγματώδης).<sup>60</sup> According to the early paschal authors, the Christian hermeneutical effort represents a post-incarnational intellectual phenomenon, while the incarnation counts as a climactic hermeneutical moment because it is the highest manifestation of the truth.

The incarnation is not only a central moment in terms of divine revelation and scriptural hermeneutics, but it also plays a main role in epistemology. As Melito describes it, the event of the incarnation indicates the disclosure of the highest mysteries of heaven and the coming of “the Christ above” (τὸν ἄνω Χριστόν)<sup>61</sup> or “the Jerusalem above” (τὴν ἄνω Ἱερουσαλήμ).<sup>62</sup> This “coming” implies a crucial change regarding the sacred location or the geography where the divine mysteries—at least the pre-eschatological ones—are revealed. Instead of heaven, their scene is the earth. Additionally, the change in the geography of the divine mysteries entails a significant shift in the method of accessing them. In the post-incarnational context, human ascension becomes useless, because the source or the treasure of mysteries descended to earth and resides here in an invisible way. Instead, human beings have to become initiated into Christ’s mysteries.

Paschal authors, therefore, though employing an epistemic scheme similar to the apocalyptic one, place this apocalyptic epistemology in a mystery context. They will play the role of the initiated interpreter able to discern the mysteries, distil the accurate interpretation, and make manifest the truth from the ancient parables. Melito explains this particular model:

[T]he model was made void, conceding its power to the reality (τῇ ἀληθείᾳ), and the law was fulfilled, conceding its power to the gospel. In the same way as the model was made void, conceding the image to the truly real (τῷ φύσει ἀληθεῖ τὴν εἰκόνα παραδούς), and the parable was fulfilled, being elucidated by the interpretation (ὑπὸ τῆς ἐρμηνείας φωτισθεῖσα).<sup>63</sup>

In a similar way, Pseudo-Hippolytus affirms that the types are fulfilled (τῶν τύπων τὰ πληρώματα) in those initiated, and the shadow of truth present in the law evolves, in them, to the “accuracy and certainty of the truth” (ἡ ἀκριβεία καὶ βεβαίωσις τῆς ἀληθείας).<sup>64</sup> Accessing the truth and the mystery actually leads to the encounter with God, though this time not in an

<sup>60</sup> Pseudo-Hippolytus, *IP* 9.35.

<sup>61</sup> Melito, *PP* 44.289.

<sup>62</sup> *PP* 45.291.

<sup>63</sup> *PP* 42–43.271–274.

<sup>64</sup> Pseudo-Hippolytus, *IP* 2.9–10.

apocalyptic-ascensional way but in an internalized and mysterious form.<sup>65</sup> Thus, the exercise of typology represents the initiation into, and the revelation of, God's highest mysteries, an exercise which leads as well to the encounter with the real, active, and mysterious divine presence on earth.

Through this encounter, Christ carries "man to the heights of heaven" and shows him the Father.<sup>66</sup> According to Melito's text, the Logos utters his divine call in the following way:

Come then, all you families of men who are compounded with sins, and get forgiveness of sins. For I am your forgiveness, I am the Pascha of salvation, I am the lamb slain for you; I am your ransom, I am your life, I am your light, I am your salvation, I am your resurrection, I am your king. I will raise you up by my right hand; I am leading you up to the heights of heaven; there I will show you the Father from ages past.<sup>67</sup>

Thus, the paschal authors reserved the apocalyptic method of ascension for the eschatological time. At the eschaton, *ascensio* and *visio Dei* are not fragmentary moments in the earthly life of a human being, followed by the return to the earth and ordinary life as in *1 Enoch* and other apocalyptic works, but they represent the promised, final, and definitive ascension and vision of God.

## 6. CONCLUSION

The pre-Nicene paschal authors, therefore, share an apocalyptic epistemic paradigm with the *Book of Daniel*, *1 Enoch*, Pauline epistles, and other apocalyptic materials in which the truth is unveiled through a scribal exegetical process. This process was primarily done through the interpretation of parables and the revelation of divine and heavenly mysteries. The paschal authors' standpoint, however, reflects a special development of this apocalyptic paradigm in early Christianity; it is one in which the access to the celestial mysteries is no longer performed exclusively through ascension but through a complex process of initiation into Christ's mysteries. Ascension becomes an expectation generally associated with the eschatological return to, and vision of, the Father. The event of Christ's incarnation represents the descent of the primary source of revelation and wisdom, while ascension

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<sup>65</sup> See below Pseudo-Hippolytus's mystery apocalypse.

<sup>66</sup> Melito, *PP* 102.764.

<sup>67</sup> Melito, *PP* 103. Cf. Ps-Hippolytus, *IP* 61.



remains a process associated with the eschaton. Typology, in this intellectual context, represents a method of interpreting the parables of Scripture, of revealing, and generally mediating the hidden truth of heaven and divine mysteries. Thus, the Christian interpreter becomes the scribe and mystagogue of a new type of mysteries.

## CHAPTER NINE

### CONTEMPLATING ON EARTH THE RADIANT NOETIC ANTHROPOS: PSEUDO-HIPPOLYTUS'S "MYSTERY APOCALYPSE"

The present chapter will emphasize a new methodological mark of the pre-Nicene paschal theology. This mark is especially connected with the liturgical-mystical facet of this theology and its position concerning the invisible or mystery dimension of reality. More precisely, the liturgical mysticism of the pre-Nicene paschal theology links the idea that the divine *kabod* descended to earth in Jesus Christ with the thought that the *kabod* resides in an invisible, intelligible, and mystery dimension. Consequently, the encounter with the *kabod* does not require ascension any longer but rather the acquisition of a special epistemic ability, the rational or noetic perception, the only capacity able to trespass into the invisible realm and contemplate God's noetic light.

Scholars have noticed the presence of mystery terminology and imagery in Pseudo-Hippolytus's *Εἰς τὸ ἅγιον Πάσχα*. In this respect, the following passage from chapter 62 may be one of the most illustrative:

O mystical choir (ὦ τῆς χορηγίας τῆς μυστικῆς)! O feast of the Spirit (ὦ τῆς πνευματικῆς ἐορτῆς)! O Pasch of God, who hast come down from heaven to earth, and from earth ascended again to the heavens. O feast common to all (τῶν ὅλων ἐότασμα), O universal joy, and honor of the universe, its nurture and its luxury, by whom the darkness of death has been dissolved and life extended to all, by whom the gates of heaven have been opened (ἀνεώχθησαν) as God has become man and man has become God. ... An antiphonal choir has been formed on earth to respond to the choir above. O Pasch of God, no longer confined to the heavens and now united to us in spirit; through him the great marriage chamber has been filled. ... O Pasch, illumination (φώτισμα) of the new bright day [literally, "torch procession:" λαμπαδουχία]—the brightness (ἀγλαΐσμα) of the torches of the virgins, through which the lamps of the soul are no longer extinguished, but the divine fire of charity [literally, "the fire of grace:" τῆς χάριτος ... τὸ πῦρ] burns divinely and spiritually in all.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *IP* 62. For mystery language, see Cantalamessa, *L'Omelia*, 104–108, and Visonà, *Pseudo Ippolito*, 345–347.

Reniero Cantalamessa regards the presence of mystery language in the paschal celebration as part of the general Christian polemical response to mystery religions, a method also manifest in Melito and Clement of Alexandria.<sup>2</sup>

In addition to mystery terminology, this passage contains biblical imagery and language such as “Pascha,” “spirit,” “angelic choir,” “virgins,” and “marriage chamber” as well as two references to God’s “descent” and “ascension.” In the present chapter I would like to direct my investigation again towards a reading of the text under the hermeneutical key of Jewish apocalyptic traditions and in this way to draw the conclusions which the presence of such traditions entails. Another key passage of the text will be relevant for understanding this new angle of investigation:

Now is it the time when the blessed light of Christ sheds its rays; the pure rays (φωστῆρες) of the pure Spirit rise and the heavenly treasures of divine glory (δόξα) are opened up. Night’s darkness and obscurity have been swallowed up, and the dense blackness dispersed in this light of day; crabbed death has been totally eclipsed. Life has been extended (ἐφηπλώθη) to every creature and all things are diffused in brightness (φῶς). The dawn of dawn ascends over the earth (ἀνατολαὶ ἀνατολῶν ἐπέχουσι τὸ πᾶν)<sup>3</sup> and he who was before the morning star and before the other stars, the mighty (μέγας) Christ, immortal and mighty (πολύς), sheds light brighter than the sun on the universe.<sup>4</sup>

Anticipating some of the main conclusions of the present chapter, *In sanctum Pascha* may be envisaged as a special sort of apocalypse, which I would call “mystery apocalypse.” Since the heavenly temple extends its presence to the terrestrial world and the celestial king descends to earth, ascension becomes an inadequate enterprise. The consequence is that the visionary’s ascent sensibly turns into a mystagogy. Instead of ascension, the visionary needs to cross realms from the visible to the invisible, from the manifested to the concealed or mysterious, and from the sensible universe to the intelligible one. Pertaining to the same Asiatic tradition as Melito’s *Peri Pascha*, Pseudo-Hippolytus’s homily witnesses more visibly than Melito to the central synthesis of “mystery” and “apocalyptic” traditions in Christian context. The application of this synthesis of mystery and apocalyptic idioms to the festival of Pascha had such a profound impact that it would remain normative for Christian liturgical life to the present day.

<sup>2</sup> Cantalamessa, *L’Omelia*, 104.

<sup>3</sup> Nautin translated the Greek word τὸ πᾶν as “l’univers” (*Homélie*s, 116), while Visonà rendered it as “l’universo” (*Pseudo Ippolito*, 231).

<sup>4</sup> *IP* 1.1–12.

## 1. THE COSMIC EXTENSION OF THE HEAVENLY TEMPLE

In a schematic phrase, John J. Collins tries to grasp some emblematic features of every apocalypse:

[A] genre of revelatory literature with a narrative framework, in which a revelation is mediated by an otherworldly being to a human recipient, disclosing a transcendent reality which is both temporal, insofar as it envisages eschatological salvation, and spatial insofar as it involves another, supernatural world.<sup>5</sup>

From a methodological perspective, we have to remind, at the same time, Eibert J.C. Tigchelaar's following statements: "[a] definition is not a prerequisite for historical studies and might even prove to be an impediment," and "apocalyptic, too, is resistant to definition."<sup>6</sup> Several scholars define Collins's perspective as the "generic" approach to apocalypses, and Florentino García-Martínez asserts that sometimes this approach manifests the weakness of being too general and ahistorical.<sup>7</sup> While being aware of the

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<sup>5</sup> Collins, "Introduction: Toward the Morphology of a Genre," in *Apocalypse: The Morphology of a Genre* (*Semeia* 14 [1979]: 1–19), 9; cf. *The Apocalyptic Imagination: An Introduction to Jewish Apocalyptic Literature* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 5. Cf. Jean Carmignac, "Qu'est-ce que l'Apocalyptique: son emploi à Qumran," *Rev. Q.* 10, no. 1 (1979): 3–33.

<sup>6</sup> See Eibert J.C. Tigchelaar, "More on Apocalyptic and Apocalypses," *JSJ* 18, no. 2 (1987): 137–144. See the Uppsala colloquium's *religionsgeschichtlich* perspective on apocalypticism: David Hellholm, ed., *Apocalypticism in the Mediterranean World and the Near East: Proceedings of the International Colloquium on Apocalypticism, Uppsala, August 12–17, 1979* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1983).

<sup>7</sup> See Florentino García-Martínez, "Encore l'Apocalyptique," *JSJ* 17 (1986): 224–232. For supplementary bibliography, see William Davies, ed., *The Background of the New Testament and Its Eschatology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964); Leonhard Rost, *Einführung in der alttestamentlichen Apokryphen und Pseudepigraphen einschliesslich der grossen Qumran-Handschriften* (Heidelberg: Quelle u. Meyer, 1971); Klaus Koch, *The Rediscovery of Apocalyptic*, SBT 22 (Naperville: Allenson, 1972); Hanson, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic*; Collins, "Towards the Morphology of a Genre"; Ithamar Gruenwald, *Apocalyptic and Merkavah Mysticism* (Leiden: Brill, 1980); T. Francis Glasson, "What is Apocalyptic?" *NTS* 27 (1981): 98–105; George W.E. Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature Between the Bible and the Mishnah: An Historical and Literary Introduction* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981); Rowland, *The Open Heaven*; David Hellholm, "The Problem of Apocalyptic Genre and the Apocalypse of John," in Hellholm, *Apocalypticism in the Mediterranean*, 13–64; Martin McNamara, *Intertestamental Literature* (Wilmington, DE: M. Glazier, 1983); Michael Stone, "Apocalyptic Literature," in Stone, *Jewish Writings*, 383–441; David Aune, "The Apocalypse of John and Ancient Revelatory Literature," in *The New Testament in Its Literary Environment*, LEC 8 (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1987), 226–252; Helge Kvanvig, *Roots of Apocalyptic: The Mesopotamian Background of the Enoch Figure and of the Son of Man* (Neukirchen Vluyn: Neuchirchener Verlag, 1988); Gabriele Boccaccini, *Beyond the Essene Hypothesis: The Parting of the Ways Between Qumran*

historical and contingent character of Collins's definition of apocalypse, I will use it as a helpful guideline whose features do not have to be regarded as necessary and complete, but as delineating some of the most frequent characteristics of the Jewish apocalyptic traditions.<sup>8</sup>

All the key elements of an apocalypse mentioned by Collins (narrative framework, revelation, mediatorial heavenly being, human recipient, and transcendent knowledge) can be identified in the text ascribed to Pseudo-Hippolytus. However, Pseudo-Hippolytus reshapes these features through the theoretical lens of the aforementioned ideas, specifically the descent of the *kabod*, its intelligible nature, and the possibility of accessing it only through noetic perception.

Starting with the narrative framework, the homily encompasses an obvious two-step history of salvation which assumes the vision of a divine economy developed in two stages: the epoch preceding the incarnation, a time of figures, types, and symbols, and the era of truth, when the divine king with his temple and light descend to earth. Nautin and Visonà, for example, divided the text of the homily following this broad two-step framework:

Nautin: vv. 1–3: Exordium; vv. 4–8: Subject and plan; vv. 9–42: First part: The figures (9–10: The law; 11–42: The Pascha; 11–15: The first Pascha; 16–42: The solemnity); vv. 43–61: Second part: The truth (43–48: Christ's coming; 48–61: The passion); vv. 62–63: Peroration.

Visonà: vv. 1–3: Introductory hymn; vv. 4–7: The plan of the homily plus the reproduction of the text of Exod 12; vv. 8–42: The Passover and its accomplishment / perfection [in Christ] (9–15: The paschal mystery in the light of the economy of the law; 16–42: [Typological] Exegesis on Exod 12);

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and *Enochic Judaism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998); John J. Collins, "Genre, Ideology and Social Movements in Jewish Apocalypticism," in *Mysteries and Revelations: Apocalyptic Studies since the Uppsala Colloquium*, ed. John J. Collins and James H. Charlesworth (Sheffield: Sheffield University Press, 1991), 11–32; Karlheinz Müller, *Studien zur frühjüdischen Apokalyptik*, SBA 11 (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1991); Devorah Dimant, "Apocalyptic Texts at Qumran," in *Community of the Renewed Covenant, the Notre Dame Symposium on the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. Eugene Ulrich and James VanderKam (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 1994), 175–191; Stephen Cook, *Prophecy and Apocalypticism: The Postexilic Social Settings* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995); Frederick Murphy, "Introduction to Apocalyptic Literature," in *The New Interpreter's Bible*, ed. Leander E. Keck (Nashville: Abingdon, 1996), 7:1–16; Paolo Sacchi, *Jewish Apocalyptic and Its History*, JSPSS 20 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996); Eibert C. Tigchelaar, *Prophets of Old and the Day of the End: Zechariah, the Book of Watchers, and Apocalyptic*, OtSt 35 (Leiden: Brill, 1996); Craig Evans and Peter Flint, eds. *Eschatology, Messianism, and the Dead Sea Scrolls: Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997); Stephen Cook, *The Apocalyptic Literature* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2003).

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Collins, "Toward the Morphology," 9.

vv. 43–61: The Pascha of the Logos in its actualization / realization (43–48: The incarnation; 49–58: The passion and death; 59–61: The glorification); vv. 62–63: Final aretology and peroration.<sup>9</sup>

The passage *IP* 1.1–12 depicts the common apocalyptic image of the opened heavens which recalls for example Ezek 1:1, especially if one observes the use of the same verb פתח, ἀνοίγω (in LXX and *IP*), rendering the English verb “to open.” We will see in the next part of the study that the expression “open heaven” and other similar phrases function as *termini technici* in biblical and apocalyptic literature announcing a celestial vision.<sup>10</sup> Additionally, the aperture of heavens in this text generates a theophany: the heavenly light floods the universe, while its source—the Logos-Christ—manifests himself in huge dimensions, similar to those present in the ancient theophanies of the Bible and pseudepigraphic apocalypses.

As previous scholars have shown, the heavenly temple represents a central *topos* in apocalyptic literature.<sup>11</sup> The visionary experiences rapture by being translated into the celestial temple where he is allowed to contemplate the heavenly king, the throne, and the myriads of angels glorifying the king.<sup>12</sup> Regarding Pseudo-Hippolytus, he does not expound much on the earthly temple, the church. To the contrary, he is more interested in the divine and mystical one, while the earthly or visible temple represents the mere entrance, or the lintel, to the celestial Jerusalem.

Consequently, since the heavenly glory dwells on earth and has to be reached in this terrestrial immediacy, Pseudo-Hippolytus's theoretical construction belongs to a different paradigm than the apocalyptic genre or, at least, a different species of apocalyptic construction. Now, Christ's coming (ἐπιδημία) turns out to be the moment when the border between the celestial temple and earth disappears. The result is that the earth becomes flooded by the presence of the divine light. The homilist states in the opening phrase of the hymn: “the heavenly treasures of the divine glory (δόξα) are opened up.”<sup>13</sup>

<sup>9</sup> See Nautin, *Homélie*, 67 and Visonà, *Pseudo Ippolito*, 49. Melito's *Peri Pascha* follows the same framework; cf. Stewart-Sykes, *The Lamb's High Feast*.

<sup>10</sup> See also Gen 7:11, Ps 78:23, Matt 3:16; Mark 1:10 (σχιζω); 7:34 (διανοίγω); Luke 3:21; Acts 7:56; 10:11; Rev 4:1; 19:11.

<sup>11</sup> For an extended bibliography, see for instance Elior, *Three Temples*.

<sup>12</sup> See, e.g., 1 *En.* 14, Dan 7:9–14, 4QShirShabb, *Apoc. Zeph.* 8, 4 *Bar.* 10, 2 *En.* 3; 22, Rev. 4, *Ascen. Isa.* 7–10.

<sup>13</sup> *IP* 1.3: οὐράνιοι δὲ δόξης καὶ θεότητος ἀνεώγασι θησαυροί. The word “glory” represents a well-known apocalyptic concept: כבוד, God's glory; see, for instance, Jarl Fossum, “Glory,” in *DDD*, 348–352.

The tradition of the divine light or glory stored above the heavens has ancient biblical roots. Ps 8:1, for example, reads, “you have set your glory above the heavens.” The theme of the descended or extended celestial temple manifests similarities with biblical and extra-biblical literature. 2 Chr 7:1–3 epitomizes one of the most ancient witnesses to this pattern:

When Solomon had ended his prayer, fire came down from heaven (τὸ πῦρ κατέβη ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ) ... and the glory of the Lord filled the temple (δόξα κυρίου ἔπλησεν τὸν οἶκον). ... When the children of Israel saw the fire come down and the glory of the Lord upon the temple (πάντες οἱ υἱοὶ Ἰσραηλ ἐώρων καταβαῖνον τὸ πῦρ, καὶ ἡ δόξα κυρίου ἐπὶ τὸν οἶκον), they bowed down with their faces to the earth on the pavement.

Psalm 148 is also illustrative, with its depiction of a cosmic glorification of Yahweh in which all the creatures of the heavenly realm (angels, hosts of heaven, sun and moon, stars, the highest heavens, and the waters above the heavens) as well as all the creatures belonging to the terrestrial dominion (sea monsters and ocean depths, fire and smoke, hail, snow and storm, mountains and hills, trees and beasts, kings and peoples) offer their individual eulogy to their Creator. The thirteenth line—“Let them praise the name of the Lord: for his name alone is exalted; his glory [ἡ δόξα] is above earth and heaven”—is especially remarkable for disclosing the idea that the divine glory is universally extended in creation (heaven and earth), although it is not obvious whether the glory or the heavenly temple descends.

The themes of the descended glory and the king of glory reoccur in the New Testament writings and pseudepigraphic materials. As mentioned above, the Gospels, for example, see Christ’s incarnation as the moment when the heavenly light descended to earth, as in the visions of Matt 4:16–17 and Luke 1:78–79. Likewise, Luke 2:13–14 describes the angelic armies descending to earth in the night of Nativity and singing for their newborn king. In addition, the eschaton, as described in Matt 24:27 and Luke 17:24, seems to be the moment when the Son of Man will appear as a lightning—ἀστραπή, used in both cases—filling the whole visible world. For John, too, Christ was light (e.g., John 1:7–9 and 1John 1:1–3; 5:7; 2:8–10), and his disciples have seen his glory (δόξα: John 1:14).<sup>14</sup> Pseudo-Hippolytus’s introductory

<sup>14</sup> For the idea that Jesus was conceived as Temple in the writings of the New Testament, see for instance Bill Salier, “The Temple in the Gospel According to John,” 121–134, and Steve Walton’s “A Tale of Two Perspectives? The Place of the Temple in Acts?” in *Heaven on Earth: The Temple in Biblical Theology*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander and Simon Gathercole (Carlisle, Cumbria, UK: Paternoster Press, 2004), 135–149.

hymn parallels in its emblematic images the prologue of the Gospel of John: Christ, who is the “light” and “life,” came into the world; “darkness” has been swallowed up, and the life has been “extended to every creature.” The anonymous author is also indebted to John, or his disciple, for other christological titles, such as the “manna” or the “bread” which came down from heaven.<sup>15</sup> Perhaps the most explicit text regarding the descent of the divine glory appears in Rev 21:10–11:

And in the spirit he carried me away to a great, high mountain and showed me the holy city of Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God. It has the glory (δόξα) of God and a radiance (φωσθήρ) like a very rare jewel, like jasper, clear as crystal.

An internalized version of the theme of the descended glory may be encountered in 1 Cor 6:19, a passage developing a theory about a third temple, which is the temple of the human body (σῶμα), deemed as the “temple of the Holy Spirit.”

The theme of the descended heavenly temple, or *hekhal*, occurs as well in several writings pertaining to the Second Temple, such as Daniel 7, 4 *Ezra*, *Joseph and Aseneth*, and the *Testament of Abraham* as well as in such pseud-epigraphic materials of the New Testament as the *Gospel of the Nazarenes* and the *Epistle to the Apostles*.<sup>16</sup> In *sanctum Pascha* and the *Epistle to the Apostles* even share a few common elements: (1) the descent of *light* and *life*, seen as identical in both writings (*IP* 1; *Ep. Apos.* 39); (2) the vision of the divine economy as Christ’s coming in a descent (*Ep. Apos.* 13.2; 39.11) followed by an ascension (*Ep. Apos.* 13.8; 14.8; 18.4; 29.7), also compared with the rising of the sun (the same verb ἀνατέλλω comes out in both *IP* 1.2 and *Ep. Apos.* 16:3); (3) the two sources connect Christ’s coming with the Pascha (*Ep. Apos.* 16); and (4) the two sources manifest strong Johannine influences.

The topic of the descended heavenly temple emerges in other main early Christian writings. Starting with Melito’s *Peri Pascha*, we have to mention *PP* 44.289, for instance, in which Christ comes from heaven, in opposition to the earthly temple. As seen above, comparing the Jerusalem from above with the terrestrial one in *PP* 45.290–300, Melito deems that the glory (δόξα) of God sits down, is established (καθίσθρται), not in a single place (ἐφ’ ἐνὶ τόπῳ),

<sup>15</sup> *IP* 8.4; 25.11–12.

<sup>16</sup> See, e.g., F. Flannery-Dailey, “Calling Down Heaven: Descent of the Hekhal in Second Temple Judaism as a Window onto Ritual Experience” (paper presented at the SBL national conference, Washington DC, November 2006).



but his grace (χάρις) overflows unto all the boundaries of the inhabited world (ἐπὶ πάντα τὰ πέρατα τῆς οἰκουμένης). The idea of descended glory will also appear in Cyprian's *On Lord's Prayer* 4, Clement's *Protreptikos* 11.114.1–2, and Origen's first *Homily on Ezekiel* 1.6–8. According to David J. Halperin, Origen's source of inspiration seemed to be the *Sinai Haggadot*.<sup>17</sup> However, all these sources and probably *In sanctum Pascha* (if a pre-Origenian writing) indicate that Origen's vision may be integrated in this ancient Jewish and Christian tradition about the descended divine *kabod*.

## 2. MYSTERY LANGUAGE AND *VISIO DEI*

While the paschal event, as described in Pseudo-Hippolytus, converts into a visionary moment, into an apocalyptic mise-en-scène, the anonymous author does not offer a traditional apocalyptic scenario. The *kabod*, therefore, usually residing in heaven, descends to earth and floods the whole creation. This change in the geography of the sacred implies a cardinal change from the perspective of the human being who intends to access the divine. The access to the luminous countenance of God is no longer accomplished through *ascension* but through *mystagogy*. The visionary does not need to ascend to heaven, since the heaven descended to him and filled the entire cosmos. The Christian *kabod*, the Son of God, who is the luminous king of angels, descends himself to the initiand and gradually unveils himself to the neophyte in his divine dimension as a gigantic, noetic, and incandescent divine corporeality.

In a short methodological exposition in chapters 4–7, Pseudo-Hippolytus manifestly asserts that the divine temple and its light are not visible in the way we see the sensible things, but they are rather hidden and mysterious, and part of the veiled side of the world, where the mysteries of the Truth can be found.<sup>18</sup> Similar to Philo's *Questions and Answers on Exodus* and Melito's *Peri Pascha*, the homilist connects his mystagogy with a typological exegesis of Exodus 12.<sup>19</sup> While the types or figures (τύποι) of the book of Exodus can be seen through the bodily eyes, the prototypes or paradigms (πρωτότυποι καὶ παραδέγματα) are not visible but mystical (μυστικά) and

<sup>17</sup> See David J. Halperin, *The Faces of the Chariot: Early Jewish Responses to Ezekiel's Vision*, TSAJ 16 (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1988), esp. 327–335.

<sup>18</sup> *IP* 7.5: τὰ τῆς ἀληθείας μυστήρια.

<sup>19</sup> It seems that a hermeneutical tradition of interpreting Exod 12 within the paschal context may be traced from Philo's *QE* to Melito, Pseudo-Hippolytus, and Origen.

apprehensible only through intellect or intuition (νοῦς).<sup>20</sup> Since the glory is not located exclusively within the upper realm but settled everywhere on earth, the heavenly ascension becomes utterly meaningless. For this reason, the author logically changes the *ascension* into a *mystagogy*, a trespass into the mystery realm which exists on earth as well, not solely in heaven. The visionary, which is the Christian initiate, has to endeavor to acquire a mystical knowledge (*IP* 4.2; 50.5) by pursuing the itinerary of contemplating with accuracy the mysteries hidden within the types.<sup>21</sup> Since the light of Christ and the Spirit spread in the universe cannot be seen with the bare eye, the participants in the liturgy need to be initiated.<sup>22</sup> Within this context, the paschal feast itself becomes a special cosmic celebration: it is a *mystical* or *mystery celebration*, perceptible solely through the power of intuition.

Carrying on the same logic, Pseudo-Hippolytus asserts that the sacrifice and even the Lamb which “has come down from the heaven” are mystical.<sup>23</sup> The Lamb is then a “perfect” (τέλειον; 19.1) and “sacred sacrifice” (τὸ θύμα τὸ ἱερόν; 18.1) while the Pascha is also mystical (1.15). Thus, the same synthesis of mystery and apocalypticism emerges again.

It is a well-known matter that Pascha is connected with the apocalyptic theme of resurrection, and the heavenly Lamb represents an apocalyptic image which occurs in the Book of Revelation: first as the slaughtered or sacrificed Lamb, then as the Lamb sitting on the heavenly throne among the angels who glorify him.<sup>24</sup> The mystery attribute ἱερός (sacred) qualifies in *In sanctum Pascha* everything connected with Christ and his temple: rays (1.1),

<sup>20</sup> *IP* 6.10.

<sup>21</sup> *IP* 6.5–6: τὴν δὲ ἀκριβείαν τῶν μυστηρίων διὰ τῶν τυπῶν θεωροῦντες. Perhaps because of its special connection with the Book of Revelation and the Johanne tradition, Asia Minor seems to have a particular tendency toward apocalypticism. See for instance, Adela Y. Collins, “The Revelation of John: An Apocalyptic Response to a Social Crisis,” *CurTM* 8 (1981): 4–12; Colin J. Hemer, *The Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia in Their Local Setting* (Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1986); Larry V. Crutchfield, “The Apostle John and Asia Minor as a Source of Premillennialism in the Early Church Fathers,” *JETS* 31 (1988): 411–427; Thomas B. Slater, “On the Social Setting of the Revelation to John,” *NTS* 44 (1998): 232–256; Roland H. Worth, *The Seven Cities of the Apocalypse and Greco-Asian Culture* (New York: Paulist Press, 1999); Philip A. Harland, “Honouring the Emperor or Assailing the Beast: Participation in Civic Life among Associations (Jewish, Christian and Other) in Asia Minor and the Apocalypse of John,” *JSNT* 77 (2000): 99–121.

<sup>22</sup> *IP* 4.2.

<sup>23</sup> See *IP* 2.15 and *IP* 20.4–5: τὸ πρόβατον ἔρχεται τὸ ἐκ τῶν οὐρανῶν.

<sup>24</sup> Rev 5:6; 9; 12–13. Cf. John 1:29,36; Acts 8:32; 1 Cor 5:7; 1 Pt 1:19; 2:24. For the roots of this image, see Gen 22:7–8, 13; Exod 12:21; Lev 4:35; 5:6; 9:3. For the image of the suffering righteous connected to the lamb, see Isa 52:13–53:7, Jer 11:19, etc.

church (63.3), Pascha (16.4), feast (6.1; 8.1), solemnity (3.28), knowledge (4.2), victim (18.1), lamb (23.2), body (41.4; 49.6), head (53.2), rib (53.9), blood and water (53.9–10), spirit (47.6–7), word (59.4), and resurrection (60.1–2).

The recurring usage of such terms as ἱερός, μυστικός, πνευματικός, θεῖος, μέγας may not be the “mania for hyperbole of a mediocre orator,”<sup>25</sup> but rather the effort of suggesting that those realities of the temple and especially its king—the luminous Christ—do not belong to the sensible realm but to the invisible, noetic, or mysterious side of the world. It can be also noticed that the attribute μέγας is used as well particularly in connection to the divine temple and Christ’s body: consequently, rather than being a note of grandiloquence, as Nautin suggested, it might be the Jewish biblical and pseudepigraphical theme of the divine body.<sup>26</sup> In this way, all these adjectives may constitute the linguistic tools of an author expressing old apocalyptic ideas pertaining to the early Jewish-Christian mindset, rather than the rhetorical artifices of a fourth or fifth century orator.

### 3. THE PNEUMATIC NATURE OF CHRIST’S LUMINOUS BODY

The last apocalyptic feature I would like to emphasize in this chapter is the vision of God as a divine character of glorious or luminous nature. The initiatory process of revealing mysteries, according to Pseudo-Hippolytus, reaches its completion with the highest revelation, which is the vision of the light that fills the whole creation, the huge luminous body of Christ. A significant aspect of the nature of this light regards its manifestation as a body not of material, but of pneumatic or spiritual nature. The allusion to a human-like form or body of God echoes a central Jewish theme, both scriptural and apocryphal; namely, that of the divine luminous human form contemplated by the prophets and apocalyptic visionaries alike. Just for the sake of reminding them, some of the most famous passages are Exod 24:9–11, Ezek 1:26 (where on the throne sits a “figure [דמות] with the appearance [מראה] of a man [אדם];” cf. LXX: ὁμοίωμα ὡς εἶδος ἀνθρώπου), Daniel 7, and Phil 2:6 (“in the form of God” [ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ]). It is plausible that Pseudo-Hippolytus inherited this theme from a Jewish context, given the considerable Jewish presence in Asia Minor at the time, the author’s

<sup>25</sup> Nautin, *Homélie*, 46. See for instance the repeated adjective μέγας in Ezekiel the Tragedian.

<sup>26</sup> Regarding Pseudo-Hippolytus’s grandiloquence, see Nautin, *Homélie*, 43.

Quartodeciman position, and his mention of a “secret” Hebrew tradition about creation.<sup>27</sup> At the same time, it is also plausible that he acquired the apocalyptic tradition of God’s form through the mediation of his Christian community, where the theme was popular in the second century. The idea of the image or form of glory, or of the huge body of Christ, also appears in other early Christian materials, for example, in Phil 3:21, 1 Cor 11:7, *Acta Pauli*, 2 *Clement*, *Pseudo-Clementine Homilies* 17:7, and probably in Herakleon of Alexandria who, in his commentary to John 1:27, reads, “The whole world is the shoe of Jesus.”<sup>28</sup>

Pseudo-Hippolytus describes a cosmic body touching the heavens and making the earth fast by its feet, while the huge hands embrace the winds between heaven and earth.<sup>29</sup> At the same time, this body is identical with the celestial tree, the tree of paradise, the pillar of the universe, the Spirit which permeates all things, and the “ladder of Jacob, the way of angels, at the summit of which the Lord is truly established.”<sup>30</sup> It is worth noticing that none of these realities is described as visible and sensible but as mystical and pneumatic. For Pseudo-Hippolytus, such titles as “divine” (θεῖος), “pneumatic/spiritual” (πνευματικός), perfect (τέλειος), or “separated/inaccessible” (ἀπρόσιτος) refer to something radically different from the visible universe, something belonging to the noetic realm. Being separated, the effusions or emanations (ἐμβολαί) of the Spirit/Christ remain unmixed (ἄκρατος, ἀμιγές) with sensible things.<sup>31</sup>

Among the expressions related to the huge body of Christ—scattered among different parts of the text—there are a few concerning the fiery constitution of his body.<sup>32</sup> Passage *IP* 1.1–12 indicates that the mighty (μέγας) Christ, immortal and immense (πολύς), sheds light brighter than that of the sun. In *IP* 55.11, the Johannine christological title “the light of the world” receives as qualification the attribute “mighty” (τὸ μέγα τοῦ κόσμου φῶς). Furthermore, commenting on Exod 12:8 (“They shall eat the flesh that same

<sup>27</sup> *IP* 17.4.

<sup>28</sup> See Origen, *Comm. Jo.* 6.39.

<sup>29</sup> *IP* 51. Cf. *IP* 63, for the hands of God.

<sup>30</sup> *IP* 51.

<sup>31</sup> *IP* 45.7–9. Cf. 1 Tim 6:16, where God is called φῶς ἀπρόσιτος. The same title also appears in Athenagoras’s *Legatio* 16.3, along with πνεῦμα, δύναμις, and λόγος.

<sup>32</sup> For the idea of Christ’s gigantic body, see *IP* 1.11: μέγας Χριστός; 2.3: μεγάλη μεγάλου βασιλείας ἐπιδημία; 9.28: μεγάλου βασιλέως; 32.3: τῷ μεγάλῳ σώματι; 45.10: τὸ μέγεθος πᾶν τῆς θεότητος (cf. Col 2:9: πᾶν τὸ πλήρωμα τῆς θεότητος); 15.14: τῶν ἐκταθεισῶν χειρῶν Ἰησοῦ; 38.3–4: χεῖρας ἐξέτεινας πατρικᾶς, ἐκάλυψας ἡμᾶς ἐντὸς τῶν πτερύγων σου τῶν πατρικῶν; 63.2–3: τὰς χεῖρας τὰς μεγάλας. For the huge dimensions of the cosmic tree and body, see also *IP* 51.

night, roasted with fire”) the author makes the following cryptic affirmation: “This is the night on which the flesh is eaten, for the light of the world has set on the great body of Christ: *Take and eat; this is my body.*”<sup>33</sup> The interpretation of this passage has to be completed through a liturgical key, since the liturgical or eucharistic context is an obvious element. My reading would be that Pseudo-Hippolytus refers to the Christian Eucharist, which is taken or received without the vision of Christ’s glory; in other words, it is taken “in the night.” This “night” does not refer to the incapacity of seeing the visible light, but rather to the incapacity of perceiving the noetic, mystical, and pneumatic glory.

The Eucharist is subsequently identified with the “great body of Christ” on which the “light of the world” is set (ἔδω). A series of analogies may provide a better understanding of these expressions:

- 1) *The visible sun* parallels the *light of the world* (a comparison frequently used in Christian literature; see *IP* 1.12), which is the noetic and real nature of Christ.
- 2) *The night* denotes the *mystery* encapsulated within the visible elements of the Eucharist, within a matter in fact concealing the divine light of Jesus’ glorious body.
- 3) *The earth* refers to the *bread of the Eucharist*, to the visible realm again described as veiling the divine light.

In the next chapter, Pseudo-Hippolytus straightforwardly affirms that the “flesh is roasted with fire, for the spiritual or rational body of Christ is on fire.”<sup>34</sup> This christological conception implies a particular understanding of the incarnation. Pseudo-Hippolytus does not employ such verbs as σαρκώω, ἐνσωματώω, or ἐνανθρωπέω, but he renders various aspects of the mystery of the incarnation by employing a different terminology. He uses, for instance, ἀποστολή (sending; *IP* 3.21) to underline the fact that the Father sends the Son into the world. A correlative term for “sending” is ἐπιδημία (2.3; 7.6; 21.3; 43.2–3; 44.1; 47.10; 56.9)—“arriving,” “coming” (on, ἐπι)—either on earth (43.2) or into the body (σώμα; 47.10). Another notion—ἀνατολή (Dawn, Orient; 3.4; 17.14; 45.23)—renders the light of Christ which fills the universe (cf. Matt 3:16 and Luke 1:78).<sup>35</sup> This Dawn or Orient is also spiritual (πνευματική;

<sup>33</sup> *IP* 26.1: Ἐν νυκτί δὲ τὰ κρέα ἐσθίεται.

<sup>34</sup> *IP* 27.1–2: τὰ δὲ κρέα ὀπτά πυρί· ἔμπυρον γὰρ λογικὸν σῶμα τοῦ Χριστοῦ, Πύρ ἦλθον βαλεῖν εἰς τὴν γῆν.

<sup>35</sup> I am grateful to Prof. Alexander Golitzin who indicated me that ἀνατολή is already a divine name in Zech 6:12 (LXX): Τάδε λέγει κύριος παντοκράτωρ Ἰδοὺ ἀνὴρ, Ἀνατολή ὄνομα αὐτῶ.

45.23) and, therefore, mystical, not visible. The gigantic light, according to the author, set (ἔδω), contracted (συστέιλας), collected (συναθροίσας), and compressed (συναγαγῶν)<sup>36</sup> itself in Christ's body, while the immensity of his whole divinity (τὸ μέγεθος πᾶν τῆς θεότητος) remained unchanged:

He willingly confined himself to himself and collecting and, compressing in himself all the greatness of the divinity, came in the dimensions of his own choice in no way diminished or lessened in himself, nor inferior in glory (οὐ μειούμενος ἐν ἑαυτῷ οὐδὲ ἐλαττούμενος οὐδὲ τῇ δόξῃ δαπανούμενος).<sup>37</sup>

In order to access the divine corporeality of light, veiled by Christ's visible body, Christians need to be initiated and trespass the borders between the aesthetic and noetic spheres. In doing so, they will be able to perceive noetically the heavenly anthropomorphic figure which marks their being and shapes them according to its own noetic form.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

At the end of our investigation we may reflect again on the nature of this homily in light of John Collins's definition of apocalyptic genre. In this way, we can observe that the text displays [1] a large framework, the history of salvation in which [2] the celebration of the Pascha inserts itself as a privileged opportunity of accessing the divine temple, extended into the whole universe, and of contemplating [5] the divine king in a mystical and noetic way. This transcendent reality is not especially placed in an upper realm but present in a deeper, hidden *here*. [4] Participants are human initiands in a mystery rite, while [3] the homilist represents the initiated mystagogue disclosing one by one the sacred mysteries of the noetic world.

*In sanctum Pascha* reflects, therefore, similar features with some of the most representative categories of the apocalyptic literature: it is a revelation of the heavenly and divine king, of his throne, glory, and angelic choirs. However, the divine king and his *kabod* are no longer residing (solely) in heaven but everywhere in the universe. Moreover, the method of accessing

<sup>36</sup> For ἔδω, see *IP* 26.1; for the other three attributes, see *IP* 45.10–11. The idea is not new in Christian context; cf. Phil 2:6; *Odes Sol.* 7.3–6; *Acts Thom.* 15 and 80.

<sup>37</sup> *IP* 45.10–13. Cf. Melito of Sardis, *Frg.* 14. For a more detailed analysis in the context of the second century, see Cantalamessa, *L'Omelia*, 187–273. Also, cf. Philo, *Gig.* 6.27: "the good spirit, the spirit which is everywhere diffused, so as to fill the universe, which, while it benefits others, it not injured by having a participation in it given to another, and if added to something else, either as to its understanding, or its knowledge, or its wisdom."

the king or his *kabod* is no longer ascension but initiation and mystagogy. If *In sanctum Pascha* is still an apocalypse, it is an apocalypse of a different nature, namely, a *mystery apocalypse*.

The Asia Minor of the second to fourth centuries was, consequently, the place of a decisive synthesis of two traditions, apocalypse and mystery. Pseudo-Hippolytus's *In sanctum Pascha* witnesses to the application of this synthesis in the paschal celebration or, putting it differently, to a development of the paschal language and internal logic towards this mystery-apocalyptic vocabulary. Additionally, Pseudo-Hippolytus's homily is a remarkable pool of testimonies; it displays an affluent terminological and ideological treasury for the Christian theology of the second, third, or perhaps, even the early fourth century. The synthesis of Jewish apocalyptic images and Greek mystery terminology definitely witnesses to a period of syncretism as well as to a Christian community in search for the language to express and give shape to its own identity.

## SUMMARY OF PART THREE

The third part of the study has unveiled a few methodological particularities of paschal hermeneutics. While the pre-Nicene paschal authors regarded the text of Exodus 12 as a theophanic report, their effort concentrated in the way of understanding the spiritual source of this text and the divine mysteries in-scripted within it. We have seen in the first chapter that the text was solemnly recited in the paschal celebration and the paschal authors considered it a *hieros logos*. Due to its divine roots, the hermeneutical effort becomes an initiation into the mysteries of the Logos and aims at contemplating the divine light of the Logos. While a first chapter investigated the mystery language imported in pre-Nicene paschal materials, the next one unveiled its apocalyptic features. The paschal exegete becomes a wise interpreter of biblical parables, like Daniel and Enoch. The exegete is able to decipher the divine mysteries codified in the text of Exodus 12 and other biblical texts referring to God's nature and human salvation.

The third chapter investigated a different linguistic avenue which early Christians and particularly the authors of paschal homilies followed; namely, a synthesis between apocalyptic and mystery terminologies which they probably found more appropriate for the ontology of a descended and incarnate God. In this context, the apocalyptic method of ascension is logically replaced with initiation or mystagogy, a new way of accessing the noetic or mystery Anthropos. In fact, mystery language has the same intention with the noetic one and frequently both languages work together. They try to denote a realm more subtle and refined than the sensible world, a universe imperceptible by the ordinary senses, and they usually denoted it as the noetic, pneumatic, and mystery universe.

Mystery language involves in its turn a very complex setting. More than simple theorization, it implies a liturgical milieu presupposing ritual gesture, speech, visual perception, and a theology encompassing all these aspects with a net of symbols, connotations, enigmas, and parables sending to the invisible world. While apocalyptic literature developed the idea of ascension, paschal writings changed dramatically the method from ascension to mystery initiation, most likely deeply influenced by the intellectual milieu of mystery rites. Since the divine *kabod* or divine figure is no longer a sensible entity, but rather a noetic, pneumatic, and mystical reality, the method of accessing them becomes the spiritual and noetic perception. This



new epistemic capacity is able to trespass the boundaries of the visible realm and lead the initiate to the contemplation of the invisible, mysterious, and noetic world.

PART FOUR

THE NOETIC NATURE OF THE PASCHAL ANTHROPOS



## INTRODUCTION TO PART FOUR

The previous part of this study—in which we have discerned the existence of an invisible dimension of reality, also entitled intelligible (noetic) or mysterious—will be of essential importance for the present inquiry. We are able at this point to return to our investigation of paschal Christology and reengage this exploration on a new level. In so doing, we will be able to open a new chapter in early paschal theology. A new look at the early paschal writings from this newly discovered aspect will reveal us that the paschal authors describe Jesus' divine facet as noetic, spiritual, rational, and mysterious. Thus, the expected glorious Savior, the Divine Anthropos, Jesus Christ, possesses an invisible side which may be called mysterious or intelligible (noetic).

The fourth part of the study will explore this noetic dimension of paschal Christology and its Hellenistic background. In order to set this tradition in context, we need first to remind an idea already mentioned in the introduction of this work. As scholars have noticed, a large number of early Christians preferred to read biblical theophanies in a literal way, therefore in an anthropomorphic manner.<sup>1</sup> The everyday faith of the *simpliciores* and of liturgical texts had a strong connection with this hermeneutical perspective. It is also very plausible that the noetic turn in Jewish and Christian theology represented a polemical attitude against this anthropomorphic trend.

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<sup>1</sup> See, for instance, Griffin and Paulsen, "Augustine and the Corporeality of God," 97–118; and Gunar af Hällström, *Fides Simpliciorum According to Origen of Alexandria*, CHL 76 (Helsinki: Societas Scientiarum Fennica, 1984). It is emblematic that John Cassian informs that three of the four priests from Sketes refused to give a public reading to Theophilus of Alexandria's paschal letter in 399; see Cassian, *Coll.* 10.2.



PROLEGOMENA:  
POLEMICAL ATTITUDES AGAINST  
ANTHROPOMORPHIC TRADITIONS

1. ANTI-ADAMIC POLEMICS IN BIBLICAL  
AND SECOND TEMPLE MATERIALS

The noetic paradigm was not the first counterargument to anthropomorphism. Biblical and pseudepigraphic materials confirm the presence of anthropomorphic tendencies, especially in traditions associated with the divine *kabod* and Adam's figure. However, modern scholars have explored some theological traditions which criticized the Adamic and *kabod* trends for various theological reasons and advanced new theological categories of discourse. For example, the tradition of *Shem* (the Divine Name) emerged most likely in opposition to the *kabod* trend, particularly in the context of a polemic between two distinct groups of the late First Temple: the Priestly and the Deuteronomistic schools.<sup>1</sup> The central idea in this debate concerned the nature of God's manifestation. The concept of "divine glory," a key notion of the Priestly school, was many times associated with anthropomorphic descriptions of God.<sup>2</sup> In contradistinction, the Deuteronomistic school opposed this conception about God's manifestation and advanced the idea that Yahweh's favorite way of appearance was his Name.<sup>3</sup>

In connection with the Second Temple, several scholars have underlined the "long-lasting competition between Adamic and Enochic traditions," raging from the first books of the Ethiopic *Enoch* (for example, *Animal*

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<sup>1</sup> See von Rad, "Deuteronomy's 'Name,'" and Mettinger, *Dethronement of Sabaoth*. For extensive bibliographies, see Weinfeld, "Kabod;" Hans J. Zobel, "Sabaoth," *TDOT* 12 (2003), 215–232.

<sup>2</sup> E.g., Moshe Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic School* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 191–199; Ludwig Köhler, "Die Grundstelle der Imago-Dei Lehre, Genesis 1, 26," *TZ* 4 (1948): 16–17.

<sup>3</sup> In addition to the above authors, see also George H. van Kooten, *The Revelation of the Name YHWH to Moses: Perspectives from Judaism, the Pagan Graeco-Roman World, and Early Christianity* (Leiden: Brill, 2006); Sandra L. Richter, *The Deuteronomistic History and the Name Theology: "Lesakken semo san" in the Bible and the Ancient Near East* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2002).

*Apocalypse*) to the Slavonic *Enoch*.<sup>4</sup> In addition to Enochic traditions, Michael Stone includes Noachic trends among the opponents to the Adam-driven trajectories and makes the following observation concerning the Dead Sea documents: “Enochic explanation of the origin of evil contrasts with that which relates it to Adam’s sin. Adam apocrypha and legendary developments of the Adam stories are strikingly absent from Qumran, while there are many works associated with the axis from Enoch to Noah.”<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, Andrei Orlov indicates that the competition between the exalted figures of Adam and Enoch played a key role in several interwoven polemical attitudes between the Enochic tradition and such other theological poles of the Second Temple as those emphasizing the figures of Adam, Moses, and Noah.<sup>6</sup> Additionally, Orlov mentions a late Second Temple and early post-Temple revival of the debate between *kabod*-type and *shem*-type theologies. This revival emphasizes the divergence between *kabod* traditions and a theological position favoring some more subtle forms of divine manifestation, such as the divine Name and the divine Voice.<sup>7</sup>

2. EZEKIEL’S DUAL-TENSION DISCOURSE:  
BETWEEN THE STRIFE FOR ACCURATE DESCRIPTION AND THE  
AWARENESS OF THE LINGUISTIC TOOLS’ LIMITATION

It is worth mentioning, however, that sometimes biblical discourse is more complex than the dichotomy between anthropomorphism and aniconism. One of the most gripping and refined representations of God comes from a prophetic corpus of the Hebrew Bible, particularly Ezekiel 1 and 10, two visionary texts very similar in their content. As a special discursive strategy, the author always employs the preposition “like (כִּי)” before the linguistic

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<sup>4</sup> Andrei A. Orlov, *The Enoch-Metatron Tradition* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2005), 212. Cf. Gabriele Boccaccini, *Beyond the Essene Hypothesis: The Parting of the Ways Between Qumran and Enochic Judaism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 73; Michael Stone, “The Axis of History at Qumran,” in *Pseudepigraphic Perspectives: The Apocrypha and the Pseudepigrapha in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, eds. Ester Chazon and Michael E. Stone, STDJ 31 (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 133–149.

<sup>5</sup> Stone, “Axis of History,” 133.

<sup>6</sup> See Orlov, *Enoch*.

<sup>7</sup> Andrei A. Orlov, “Praxis of the Voice: The Divine Name Traditions in the *Apocalypse of Abraham*,” *JBL* 127:1 (2008): 53–70; idem, “‘The Gods of My Father Terah’: Abraham the Iconoclast and the Polemics with the Divine Body Traditions in the *Apocalypse of Abraham*,” *JSP* 18:1 (2008): 33–53; idem, “The Fallen Trees: Arboreal Metaphors and Polemics with the Divine Body Traditions in the *Apocalypse of Abraham*,” *HTR* 102 (2009): 439–451.

description of those realities which the visionary contemplates: God, the divine throne, the heavenly palace, and the celestial creatures surrounding God and his throne. The following passage 1:22–28 is a good illustration:

Over the heads of the living creatures there was something like (כ) a dome, shining like crystal, spread out above their heads. Under the dome their wings were stretched out straight, one towards another; and each of the creatures had two wings covering its body. When they moved, I heard the sound of their wings like (כ) the sound of mighty waters, like (כ) the thunder of the Almighty, a sound of tumult like (כ) the sound of an army; when they stopped, they let down their wings. And there came a voice from above the dome over their heads; when they stopped, they let down their wings. And above the dome over their heads there was something like (דמות) a throne, in appearance like sapphire; and seated above the likeness of a throne was something that seemed (כמראה) like (כ) a human form (כמראה אדם). Upwards from what appeared like the loins I saw something like gleaming amber, something that looked like fire (כמראה אש) enclosed all round; and downwards from what looked like the loins I saw something that looked like fire, and there was a splendour all round. Like the bow in a cloud on a rainy day, such was the appearance of the splendour all round. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD.

The passage, which plays a central role in later apocalyptic, rabbinic, and Christian mystical speculations, is remarkable because of the awareness with which the author distinguishes between linguistic tool and its denoted reality. The recurrent use of the preposition “like (כ)” indicates the consciousness of a certain imprecision, inaccuracy, and incapacity of the linguistic tool to grasp and describe with exactness the reality of the vision. Human words, with their anthropomorphic stance, cannot make justice to the contemplated divine reality and merely create an inaccurate approximation.

The author, therefore, with full awareness, places the linguistic report neither in the field of anthropomorphic realism, nor in the area of symbolic language, but in the fuzzy territory of a dual tension: While the writer strives to offer the best realistic expression of the vision, as much as human language could grasp it, s/he firmly suggests that language is not able to express the vision with perfect accuracy. In conclusion, at the end of the most exhaustive and complex description of God in the whole Bible, the author leaves the nature of that vision and the nature of God in a greater mystery.



## 3. PHILOSOPHICAL POLEMICS AGAINST ANTHROPOMORPHISM

The last but not the least, philosophically educated Jewish and Christian theologians of Late Antiquity promoted a different type of polemical attitude against anthropomorphic trends in their Adamic or Enochic versions. The origins of anti-anthropomorphism go back to Xenophanes of Colophon.<sup>8</sup> While in the following centuries the paradigm knew such prominent Jewish Alexandrian representatives as Aristobulus and Philo, several emblematic Hellenistic Christian and non-Christian thinkers of the second and third centuries also embraced anti-anthropomorphic stances.<sup>9</sup> However, the anthropomorphic attitude continued to be very appealing to many theologians and had its own followers until very late in the Middle Ages.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup> For Xenophanes of Colophon (c. 570–480 BCE), see *Fragmenta* 11–16;23 (*FV* 1:132–135) as well as *Testimonia* 28.19 (*FV* 1:116–117) and 31.3–5 (*FV* 1:121–122).

<sup>9</sup> For Aristobulus, see Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 8.10.1–2. For the Greek text, see K. Mras, *Eusebius Werke*, vol. 8. *Die Praeparatio Evangelica*, GCS 43/1 (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1954), 451; for Philo, see e.g. *Opif.* 69 (LCL Philo 1:54) or *Mut.* 54 (LCL Philo 5:168); for Celsus, see *Cels.* 7.27:34 (SC 150:74;90). See also Clement of Alexandria's rejection of anthropomorphism in *Str.* 5.11 (GCS 52[15]:370–377) as a "Hebrew" doctrine: *Str.* 5.11.68.3 (GCS 52[15]:371). Unlike Paulsen, I would ascribe Origen's anti-anthropomorphism mostly to his accepting this long philosophical tradition and to the very harsh criticisms from such philosophers as Celsus, rather than to Neoplatonism, a philosophical trend which chronologically succeeded Origen; see David L. Paulsen, "Early Christian Belief in a Corporeal Deity: Origen and Augustine as Reluctant Witnesses," *HTR* 83, no. 2 (1990): 105–116, esp. 106–107. A constant subject of debate among the Greek philosophers (see Harold W. Attridge, "The Philosophical Critique of Religion under the Early Empire," *ANRW* II/16:45–78), anthropomorphism was also important for such philosophers as Apuleius, Celsus, and Numenius who, taking an anti-anthropomorphic stance, articulated an apophatic discourse about God; see Gedaliahu Stroumsa, "The Incorporeality of God: Context and Implications of Origen's Position," *Rel.* 13 (1983): 345–358; cf. Karen J. Torjesen, "The Enscripturation of Philosophy: The Incorporeality of God in Origen's Exegesis," in *Biblical Interpretation: History, Context, and Reality*, eds. Christine Helmer and Tylor G. Petrey (Atlanta: SBL, 2005), 73–84. A list of Platonist, Pythagorean, and Stoic philosophers with whom Origen was acquainted was preserved in the writings of his enemy, Porphyry; see Gerard Watson, "Souls and Bodies in Origen's *Peri Archon*," *ITQ* 55, no. 3 (1989): 173–193; esp. 174.

<sup>10</sup> For rabbinic anthropomorphisms, one may consult Arthur Marmorstein, *The Old Rabbinic Doctrine of God: Essays in Anthropomorphism* (New York: KTAV, 1937); Gershom Scholem, *On the Mystical Shape of the Godhead* (New York: Schocken Books, 1976), 251–273; David Stern, "Imitatio Hominis: Anthropomorphism and the Character(s) of God in Rabbinic Literature," *Proof.* 12, no. 2 (1992): 151–174; Alon G. Gottstein, "The Body as Image of God in Rabbinic Literature," *HTR* 87 (1994): 171–196; Michael Fishbane, "The 'Measures' of God's Glory in the Ancient Midrash," in *Messiah and Christos: Studies in the Jewish Origins of Christianity Presented to David Flusser on the Occasion of His Seventy-Fifth Birthday*, ed. I. Gruenwald et al. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1992), 53–74. For Christian anthropomorphisms, see George Florovsky, "The Anthropomorphites in the Egyptian Desert" and "Theophilus of Alexandria and Apa Aphou

Unlike the aforementioned polemical traditions where the authors were veiling their identity under the names of ancient patriarchs and prophets, the names of the Hellenistic theologians are well known, as is the time when they lived. Starting with the second century BCE and going to the third century CE, one may count, for instance, Aristobulus, Philo, Irenaeus, Clement, and Origen, to name just the most famous and the most influential names.

Nevertheless, I would not consider these authors as part of a tradition distinct from the antique *kabod* trend. To the contrary, I would see them as representatives of the very *kabod* tradition struggling to amend and correct one of its particular aspects, namely, anthropomorphism. First, they still belong to the *kabod* tradition because they define God essentially as light and glory and understand his manifestation essentially as light and glory. Second, because they still make use of the terms “form” and “image” in connection with God and describe God as having a form and image. They transfer, however, this form to a more subtle level of reality, the noetic world, and frequently disavow its anthropomorphic design. It is this enigmatic figure, sometimes anthropomorphic in a noetic way, sometimes beyond any form and only metaphorically described as a human body, that I call the *noetic anthropos*. My leading thought is that the ancient biblical and pseudepigraphic “form” theology did not disappear with Hellenistic authors—with Philo, Irenaeus, Clement, Tertullian, and Origen. To the contrary, I think that these authors transferred it to the noetic and invisible realm. Regarding the temporal limits of this intellectual phenomenon, the period spans from Philo to Nicaea and the anthropomorphic controversy that followed.

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of Pemdje,” in *Aspects of Church History* (Belmont, MA: Norland, 1975), 89–129; Gilles Quispel, “The Discussion of Judaic Christianity,” in his *Gnostic Studies II* (Istanbul: Nederlands Historisch-Archaeologisch Institute, 1975), 146–158; idem, “Ezekiel 1:26,” Jarl Fossum, “Jewish-Christian Christology and Jewish Mysticism,” *VC* 37 (1983): 260–287; Grace M. Jantzen, *God’s World, God’s Body* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1984); Elizabeth A. Clark, “New Perspectives on the Origenist Controversy: Human Embodiment and Ascetic Strategies,” *CH* 59 (1990): 145–162; Paulsen, “Early Christian Belief;” Graham E. Gould, “The Image of God and the Anthropomorphic Controversy in Fourth-Century Monasticism,” in *Origeniana Quinta*, ed. Robert J. Daly (Leuven: University Press, 1992), 549–557; Elizabeth A. Clark, *The Origenist Controversy: The Cultural Construction of an Early Christian Debate* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992); Carl W. Griffin and David L. Paulsen, “Augustine and the Corporeality of God,” *HTR* 95 (2002): 97–118; Alexander A. Golitzin, “The Demons Suggest an Illusion of God’s Glory in a Form: Controversy Over the Divine Body and Vision of Glory in Some Late Fourth, Early Fifth Century Monastic Literature,” *StudMon* 44 (2002): 13–42; idem, “The Vision of God in the Form of Glory: More Reflections on the Anthropomorphic Controversy of AD 399,” in *Abba: The Tradition of Orthodoxy in the West*, eds. John Behr and Andrew Louth (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 2003), 273–298.

The intention of the fourth part of my study is to unveil the noetic Christology of early paschal theology within its Hellenistic and pre-Nicene Christian contexts. Several Hellenistic and early Christian documents mention the idea of a cosmic noetic God fulfilling the whole universe. Because it is not part of everyday perceptual experience, the vision of this cosmic God requires an extraordinary cognitive capacity: the noetic perception. Generated in the Hellenistic context, the idea assumes a turn in epistemology, especially based on two Platonic interconnected presuppositions. The first is the ontological distinction between the visible and invisible worlds and the distinct classes of entities populating the two worlds: the noetic, invisible, eternal, and unchanging things, on the one hand; the aesthetic, visible, temporary, and changing things, on the other. Second, there is a distinct epistemic capacity proper to each of the two classes of things: while visible realities are perceived through the senses, the invisible ones can be discerned solely through noetic perception, the *noesis* or *nous*, a term usually rendered in English as “intellect,” “intuition,” or “understanding.”

## CHAPTER TEN

### FROM “OPEN HEAVEN” TO NOETIC PERCEPTION: NEW ONTOLOGIES OF THE DIVINE, NEW METHODS AND EPISTEMOLOGIES OF ACCESSING THE GLORY

One can see in the next chapter that Melito, Pseudo-Hippolytus, and Origen sometimes describe Jesus’ divine dimension as noetic, pneumatic, or “rational.” In order to have a better comprehension of these expressions and the linguistic turn from ordinary language and its anthropomorphic nuances to noetic vocabulary, we need a more detailed introduction to the Hellenistic context and the roots of this noetic turn which is a direct amendment of the anthropomorphic reading of biblical theophanies.

#### 1. THE IMAGE OF THE “OPEN HEAVEN” IN SCRIPTURE AND APOCALYPTIC MATERIALS

As seen above, Martha Himmelfarb observes that the category of ascension involves an emblematic turn from prophetic to apocalyptic narrative. Unlike the prophets, who receive the divine vision on earth, the apocalyptic seers ascend to the heavenly temple: “Ezekiel is the only one of all the classical prophets to record the experience of being physically transported by the spirit of God, but even Ezekiel does not ascend to heaven.”<sup>1</sup>

Modern scholars have also explored the apocalyptic ontologies and epistemologies and concluded that the heavenly temple represents a central category of this literature.<sup>2</sup> As Mircea Eliade and other specialists in the

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<sup>1</sup> Himmelfarb, “From Prophecy to Apocalypse: The Book of the Watchers and Tours of Heaven,” in *Jewish Spirituality: From the Bible through the Middle Ages*, ed. Arthur Green (New York: Crossroad, 1986), 145–170, esp. 150. Isaiah, for instance (see Isa 6:1–3), receives the divine revelation within the earthly temple of Jerusalem. Cf. John J. Collins, *Apocalypticism in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (New York: Routledge, 1998), 130.

<sup>2</sup> E.g., Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, “Cultic Language in Qumran and the New Testament,” *CBQ* 18 (1976): 159–177; Rowland, *Open Heaven*; Martha Himmelfarb, *Tours of Hell: An Apocalyptic Form in Jewish and Christian Literature* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1983); Jon D. Levenson, “The Temple and the World,” *JR* 64 (1984): 275–298; idem, “The Jerusalem Temple in Devotional and Visionary Experience,” in Green, *Jewish Spirituality*,

semantics of religious symbolisms explain, religion is always interested in reaching the very core of existence, the “place” where God dwells, the center of everything or the center as such. Regarded from this perspective, religion becomes a search for that center of existence, a sacred journey and pilgrimage, whether metaphorically or simply literally understood.<sup>3</sup> As mentioned above, Himmelfarb shows that the prophetic method of accessing the divine—the *visio Dei* taking place on earth—changes, in apocalyptic literature, to the method of ascension. Confirming Eliade’s logic, Christopher Rowland indicates that the change of the divine indwelling from the earthly sanctuary to heaven entails the change of the method of accessing the divine glory, from terrestrial vision to ascension and *visio Dei* in the celestial realm.<sup>4</sup>

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32–61; Joseph Dan, “The Religious Experience of the Merkavah,” in Green, *Jewish Spirituality*, 289–307; Martha Himmelfarb, “Apocalyptic Ascent and the Heavenly Temple,” *SBLSP* 26 (1987): 210–217; Allan J. McNicol, “The Heavenly Sanctuary in Judaism: A Model for Tracing the Origin of the Apocalypse,” *JReLS* 13:2 (1987): 66–94; Craig R. Koester, *The Dwelling of God: The Tabernacle in the Old Testament, Intertestamental Jewish Literature and the New Testament*, CBQMS 22 (Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1989); Raymond J. Tournay, *Seeing and Hearing God with the Psalms: The Prophetic Liturgy of the Second Temple in Jerusalem* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991); Martha Himmelfarb, *Ascent to Heaven in Jewish and Christian Apocalypses* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993); Elliot R. Wolfson, “Yeridah la-Merkavah: Typology of Ecstasy and Enthronement in Ancient Jewish Mysticism,” in *Mystics of the Book: Themes, Topics, and Typologies*, ed. Robert A. Herrera (New York: Lang, 1993), 13–44; Simone Rosenkranz, “Vom Paradies zum Tempel,” in *Tempelkult und Tempelzerstörung (70 n. Chr.): Festschrift für Clemens Thoma zum 60. Geburtstag*, ed. Simon Lauer and Hanspeter Ernst (Frankfurt/M.: Peter Lang, 1995), 27–131, esp. 29–35 and 49–56; Rachel Elior, “From Earthly Temple to Heavenly Shrines: Prayer and Sacred Song in the Hekhalot Literature and its Relation to Temple Traditions,” *JSQ* 4 (1997): 217–267; Christopher R.A. Morray-Jones, “The Temple Within: The Embodied Divine Image and its Worship in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Jewish and Christian Sources,” *SBLSS* 37 (1998): 400–431; Elior, *The Three Temples*; T. Desmond Alexander and Simon Gathercole, eds., *Heaven on Earth: The Temple in Biblical Theology* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2004); Annette Y. Reed, “Heavenly Ascent, Angelic Descent, and the Transmission of Knowledge in 1 Enoch 6–16,” in *Heavenly Realms and Earthly Realities in Late Antique Religions*, ed. Ra’anan S. Boustan and Annette Y. Reed (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Frances Flannery-Dailey, *Dreamers, Scribes, and Priests: Jewish Dreams in the Hellenistic and Roman Eras* (Leiden: Brill, 2004); Annette Y. Reed, “Beyond Revealed Wisdom and Apocalyptic Epistemology: The Redeployment of Enochic Traditions about Knowledge in Early Christianity,” in *Early Christian Literature and Intertextuality*, vol. 1, *Thematic Studies*, eds. Craig A. Evans and H. Daniel Zacharias (London: T&T Clark, 2009), 138–164; Philip Alexander, *Mystical Texts: Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice and Related Manuscripts* (London: T&T Clark, 2006).

<sup>3</sup> See Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*, trans. Willard R. Trask (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1959); idem, “Sacred Places: Temple, Palace, ‘Center of the World,’” chap. 10 in *Patterns in Comparative Religion*, 367–387.

<sup>4</sup> Rowland, *Open Heaven*, 80. After making the observation that the usual apocalyptic

Rowland equally observes that the ancient biblical expression “open heaven” was frequently employed as an emblematic indicator of divine theophanies in prophetic and apocalyptic literature as well as in the New Testament.<sup>5</sup> The following examples will illustrate this thesis:

Bring the whole tithe into the treasury; let there be food in my house. Put me to the proof, says the Lord of Hosts, and see if I do not open windows in the sky and pour a blessing on you as long as there is need. (Mal 3:10)

Then he gave orders to the skies above and threw open heaven's doors; he rained down manna for them to eat and gave them the grain of heaven. (Ps 78:23–24)

On the fifth day of the fourth month in the thirtieth year, while I was among the exiles by the river Kebar, the heavens were opened and I saw visions from God. (Ezek 1:1)

Take courage, then; for formerly you were worn out by evils and tribulations, but now you will shine like the luminaries of heaven; you will shine and appear, and the portals of heaven will be opened for you.<sup>6</sup> (1 En. 104:2)

And I created for him [i.e., Adam] an open heaven, so that he might look upon the angels singing the triumphal song ... (2 En. [J] 31:2; OTP 1:152–154)

And while he was still speaking, behold, the expanses under me, the heavens, opened and I saw on the seventh firmament upon which I stood a fire spread out and a light and dew and a multitude of angels and a host of the invisible glory, and up above the living creatures I had seen. (Apoc. Ab. 19:4; OTP 1:698)

And while I [Isaac] was thus watching and exulting at these things, I saw heaven opened, and I saw a light-bearing man coming down out of heaven, flashing (beams of light) more than seven suns. (T. Ab. 7:3; OPT 1:885)

And afterward it happened that, behold, the heaven was opened, and I saw, and strength was given to me, and a voice was heard from on high ... (2 Bar. 22:1; OTP 1:629)

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cosmology presupposes the throne of glory placed in heaven, Rowland affirms: “The cosmological beliefs were such that it often became necessary for anyone who would enter the immediate presence of God to embark on a journey through the heavenly world, in order to reach God himself.”

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 78: “One of the most distinctive features of the apocalyptic literature is the conviction that the seer could pierce the vault of heaven and look upon the glorious world of God and his angels. Frequently this is expressed by the conventional expression the heavens opened (*T. Levi* 2:6 Greek; *Acts* 7:56) or the belief that a door opened in heaven (*1 En.* 14:15; *Rev* 4:1) to enable the seer to look and indeed at times to enter the realm above to gaze on its secrets.”

<sup>6</sup> Trans. Nickelsburg and VanderKam, 161.

She said to him [i.e., Eve to Seth], “Look up with your eyes and see the seven heavens opened, and see with your eyes how the body of your father lies on its face, and all the holy angels are with him, praying for him and saying, ‘Forgive him, O Father of all, for he is your image.’” (*Apoc. Mos.* 35:2; *OPT* 2:289)

And behold there came suddenly a voice from heaven, saying, “This is my Son, whom I love and in whom I have pleasure, and my commandments.” ... And there came a great and exceeding white cloud over our heads and bore away our Lord and Moses and Elias. And I trembled and was afraid, and we looked up and the heavens opened and we saw men in the flesh, and they came and greeted our Lord and Moses and Elias, and went into the second heaven.

(*Apoc. Pet. [Eth.]* 17; *NTA* 2:635)

As he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens break open and the Spirit descend on him, like a dove.<sup>7</sup> (Mark 1:10)

Then he added, “In very truth I tell you all: you will see heaven wide open and God’s angels ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.” (John 1:51)

“Look!” he said. “I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.” (Acts 7:56)

He [i.e., Peter] saw heaven opened, and something coming down that looked like a great sheet of sailcloth. (Acts 10:11)

After this I had a vision: a door stood opened in heaven, and the voice that I had first heard speaking to me like a trumpet said, “Come up here, and I will show you what must take place hereafter.” (Rev 4:1)

I saw heaven wide opened, and a white horse appeared; its rider’s name was Faithful and True, for he is just in judgment and just in war. (Rev 19:11)

The expression “open heaven” uses words of everyday language and implies as well an ordinary capacity of seeing. This epistemology is still an aesthetic epistemology, if one expresses it in Platonic terms. According to this aesthetic perspective, the expression “open heaven” presupposes a firmament similar to that of the Genesis narrative (Gen 1), as a curtain separating heaven and earth, and also the possibility for this firmament to be open as a curtain.<sup>8</sup> Unlike the aesthetic viewpoint present in the Bible and apocalyp-

<sup>7</sup> Cf. “During a general baptism of the people, when Jesus too had been baptized and was praying, heaven opened and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove.” (Luke 3:21–22); “No sooner had Jesus been baptized and come up out of the water than the heavens were opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove to alight on him” (Matt 3:16).

<sup>8</sup> Heavens are also open to let the rain come from the heavenly stores, as one can see in Gen 7:11, Deut 28:12, or 2 Bar. 10:11. In 1 En. 33–36, the stars, winds, dew, rain, and cold come forth through the gates of heaven. Likewise, 1 En. 72–76 informs about the gates of the stars, sun, moon, winds, cold, draught, frost, locusts, and desolation. Cf. 2 En. 6:1; 13:3; 14:2.

tic writings, Philo advances the Platonic distinction between the aisthetic (sense-perceptible) realm and the noetic dominion (perceptible through intuition). Noetic intuition does not presuppose a heavenly firmament to be open and crossed but the two aforementioned distinct realms and the acquisition of a special epistemic capacity—the noetic perception—the only one able to undertake the passage from the sensible to the noetic realm.

2. SEEING THROUGH THE “EYE OF THE SPIRIT:”  
AN INTERMEDIARY STAGE BETWEEN  
BIBLICAL AND NOETIC EPISTEMOLOGIES?

While the Enochic corpus already avows that the “opening of the eyes” is an epistemic condition for the vision of God (e.g., *1 En.* 1:2 and 89–91, an expression also appearing in *Ascen. Isa.* 6:6), other texts employ a special phrase which changes the utensil of perception from ordinary sight to something more spiritual. This new expression is the “eye of the spirit.” The phrase appears for instance in the *Ascension of Isaiah* in the following sentence: “And I saw the Great Glory while the eyes of my spirit were open, but I could not thereafter see, nor the angel who (was) with me, nor any of the angels whom I had seen worship my Lord.”<sup>9</sup>

The dream represents another visionary epistemic capacity distinct from sensible sight, a way of perceiving celestial entities. It is already present in such theophanies as those of *Gen* 20:6–7, *1 Kgs* 3:4–15, *1 Samuel* 3, and *1 En.* 13:8: “And look, dreams came upon me, and visions fell upon me. And I saw visions of wrath, and there came a voice, saying, ‘Speak to the sons of heaven to reprimand them.’”<sup>10</sup> Chapters 83–90 of the first Enochic corpus—entitled

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<sup>9</sup> *Ascen. Isa.* 9:37. Trans. M.A. Knibb, *OTP* 2:172. For the critical text, see Paolo Bettolo et al., eds., *Ascensio Isaiae: Textus*, CCSA 7 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1995). *Ascen. Isa.* 6:6 and 9:37 come from the section of the text called “the Vision,” which was probably produced in the second century CE, according to Knibb (*OTP* 2:150). The expression is further remarkable since Philo himself offers a definition of the *nous* as the “eye of the soul” (*Opif.* 53). The Enochic book of *Dream Visions* (*1 En.* 83–89) and its later additions (*1 En.* 91:1–11, 18, 19; 92; 94–104) seem to constitute a corpus of second century BCE materials (164–160 BCE, according to Nickelsburg and VanderKam, *1 Enoch*, 9).

<sup>10</sup> *1 En.* 13:8. Trans. Nickelsburg and VanderKam, 33. For a scholarly analysis of the idea of dream theophany, see, for example, Robert K. Gnuse, *The Dream Theophany of Samuel* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1984), 140; R. Fidler, *The Dream Theophany in the Bible* (in Hebrew; Ph.D. diss., Hebrew University, 1996); Jean-Marie Husser, *Dreams and Dream Narratives in the Biblical World* (Sheffield: Sheffield University Press, 1999); Flannery-Dailey, *Dreamers, Scribes*; idem, “Lessons on Early Jewish Apocalypticism and Mysticism



*Enoch's Dream Visions*—also includes a large array of visionary experiences which the apocalyptic hero receives in the oneiric condition.

In contradistinction to these traditional ways of envisioning the epistemic access to the divine realities (the open heaven, direct vision, dream vision, vision through the eye of the spirit, etc.), Philo will propose the noetic or intellectual perception, the *noesis*.

### 3. NOETIC PERCEPTION AND NOETIC EPISTEMOLOGY: ALEXANDRIAN JEWISH DIASPORA AND THE HERMETIC CORPUS

While Himmelfarb was pointing out the passage from prophetic to apocalyptic discourse, I would like to propose a theory which may be the next important turn in Jewish religious thought, a theory regarding a conceptual and linguistic phenomenon which I called the “noetic turn.”<sup>11</sup> Arguably one of the most important paradigm shifts of Late Antiquity, if not the most important in terms of the theological vocabulary and conceptual tools, the noetic turn denotes the translation of the ontological and epistemological categories of the apocalyptic discourse into noetic categories.<sup>12</sup>

The noetic turn should also be explained against the Platonic distinction between the noetic (intellectual, invisible) and the aesthetic (sensible, sense-perceptible, visible).<sup>13</sup> For Plato, intellectual perception already repre-

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from Dream Literature,” in *Paradise Now: Essays on Early Jewish and Christian Mysticism*, ed. A. DeConick, SBLSS 11 (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 231–247. For the Near Eastern background of this visionary tradition, see A. Leo Oppenheim, *The Interpretation of Dreams in the Ancient Near East, with a Translation of an Assyrian Dream* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1956).

<sup>11</sup> See Giulea, “Noetic Turn.”

<sup>12</sup> Reminding Himmelfarb’s distinction between the prophetic and apocalyptic ontologies and the fact that Philo also places the divine temple in heavens and invests ascension as the main method of accessing the divine, it seems, consequently, more accurate to affirm that the noetic turn represents a transformation of the apocalyptic mindset (in both biblical and extra-biblical texts).

<sup>13</sup> While Aristotle is generally correct when he affirms that the pre-Socratics did not make the distinction between *noesis* and *aisthesis* (see *De an.* III. 427a; *Metaph.* 1009b)—because they had not connected yet the *noesis* with an object of thought more subtle than matter—it is also true that Heraclitus and particularly Parmenides expressed serious reserves regarding the sense-perception and proposed the *nous* or *noesis* as a higher epistemic capacity, more appropriate for the search of the truth; cf. Francis F. Peters, “*Nôesis* (Intuition),” “*Noêtôn* (Object of the intellect),” “*Nous* (Intellect, Mind),” in his *Greek Philosophical Terms: A Historical Lexicon* (New York: NYU Press, 1970), 121–139. It is Plato, however, who associates *episteme* (the true knowledge) with *noesis* and noetic and invisible ideas, as opposed to *doxa* (the opinion), *aisthesis* (sense-perception), and sensible things; e.g., *Phaed.* 79d; *Rep.* 478a–480a;

sented a particular epistemic capacity associated exclusively with the noetic or invisible realities.<sup>14</sup> *Noesis*, therefore, should not be understood as a mere process of the mind. Such an understanding would be entirely *à rebours* to the manner in which the Greek philosophers and, subsequently, the Hellenistic thinkers from Philo to many Christian authors conceived of this capacity. Not only a pure event of the mind, *noesis* was, especially in religious discourses, the particular epistemic capacity able to perceive such divine and impalpable realities as God, angels, souls, and heavenly glory. Apprehended through the *noesis*, those realities were, consequently, noetic, extrinsic to, and independent from the human mind.

In what concerns the ontological aspect of the noetic turn, the identification of God with the *Nous* constitutes a definite paradigm already encountered in Xenophanes (e.g., fr. A 1), Pythagoras (fr. B 15), Anaxagoras (fr. A 48), Archelaos (fr. A 12), or Democritus (fr. A 74).<sup>15</sup> In *Philebus*, Plato ascribes to the cause (τὸ αἴτιον), which brings everything into being, such a diversity of titles as productive agent (τὸ ποιοῦν; 26e7), demiurgic agent (τὸ δημιουργοῦν; 27b1), and *Nous* (28d8). The *Nous* governs the universe (30c, 30d8) and actually represents Zeus's intellect (30d).<sup>16</sup> Aristotle will further define God in noetic terms. According to him, the first mover (πρῶτον κινεῖον) receives such attributes as "god" and "divine intellect," while its main activity (ἐνέργεια)

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508a–511d; *Tim.* 27. The distinction will remain essential for Middle Platonists, Hellenizing Jewish and Christian thinkers such as Philo, Clement, or Origen, and later Neo-Platonists. Aristotle, in spite of placing the Platonic forms within things, still conceives of the *nous* as the faculty of true knowledge (*episteme*). Moreover, its objects of investigation remain the intelligible things (*ta noeta*) and the forms (*ta eide*). Likewise, sense-perception (*aisthesis*) remains the faculty proper to sensible things (*ta aistheta*), as he argues in *De an.* 431b17–432a14.

<sup>14</sup> See, for instance, Plato, *Rep.* 476a–480a; 508a–511d. E.g. *Rep.* 508b–c, trans. C.D.C. Reeve (Cambridge: Hackett, 2004), 204: "What the latter [i.e., the good] is in the intelligible realm (ἐν τῷ νοητῷ τόπῳ) in relation to understanding (πρὸς τε νοῦν) and intelligible things (τὰ νοούμενα), the former [i.e., the sun] is in the visible realm (ἐν τῷ ὀρατῷ) in relation to sight (πρὸς τε ὄψιν) and visible things (τὰ ὀρώμενα)." For the Greek text, see S.R. Slings, *Platonis Rempublicam* (Oxford: Oxford Clarendon Press, 2003), 253. A similar idea occurs in *Rep.* 534a: "Belief (δόξαν) is concerned with becoming (γένεσιν); understanding (νοήσιν [i.e., intuition, the activity of the νοῦς]) with being (οὐσίαν). And as being is to becoming, so understanding is to belief; and as understanding is to belief, so knowledge (ἐπιστήμην) is to belief and thought to imagination (διάνοιαν πρὸς εἰκασίαν)."

<sup>15</sup> See Xenophanes (*FV* 1:113), Pythagoras (*FV* 1:454), Anaxagoras (*FV* 2:19), Archelaos (*FV* 2:47), Democritus (*FV* 2:102).

<sup>16</sup> For the Greek text, see *Platonis Opera*, ed. Joannes Burnet (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964). *Timaeus* reflects a similar perspective, since in this dialogue the Maker (ὁ ποιῶν; 31b2) of the universe also receives the titles of "god" (30a2; d3), "Father" (37c7), and again *Nous* (47e4).

is νόησις (*Metaph.* 1072b).<sup>17</sup> In addition, the “Philosopher” defines God as self-reflective noetic perception (νόησις νοήσεως; *Metaph.* 1074b; *Eth. nic.* 10.1177b–1178b).<sup>18</sup> The middle Platonists and Philo will further develop the noetic language in connection with divine realities and divine knowledge.<sup>19</sup> Noetic idiom can also be encountered in other religious materials of Late Antiquity, for instance in the Hermetic corpus and the *Chaldaean Oracles*.

With Philo, the Platonic distinction between the noetic and the aisthetic makes its way into Jewish thought. He translates the ancient biblical and apocalyptic languages into the idiom of these new categories. The process operates a transfer of the religious ontology of ancient Judaism—a God dwelling in heaven on a glorious throne surrounded by glory, myriads of angels, and many other celestial figures such as the divine Anthropos—to the noetic realm. Once accepted in the theological discourse, the ontological distinction between the noetic and aisthetic worlds involves the epistemological distinction between the noetic and aisthetic perceptions, between *noesis* and *aisthesis*.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>17</sup> See Werner Jaeger, *Aristotelis Metaphysica*, 3rd ed (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963), 253. In *Eth. Nic.* 1178b21–22, Aristotle defines God’s activity (ἐνέργεια) essentially as contemplative (θεωρητική) and, consequently, the highest human activity should be of the same nature; see *Aristotelis Ethica Nicomachea*, ed. Ingram Bywater (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962), 216.

<sup>18</sup> It is not aleatory, then, that the highest science or knowledge (*episteme*) which human beings have to seek is the science of the divine, e.g., *Metaph.* A.983a5–7 (Jaeger, 6–7): ἡ γὰρ θειοτάτη καὶ τιμιωτάτη; τοιαύτη δὲ διχῶς ἂν εἴη μόνη; ἢν τε γὰρ μάλιστ’ ἂν ὁ θεὸς ἔχοι, θεία τῶν ἐπιστημῶν ἐστί, καὶν εἰ τις τῶν θείων εἴη. Cf. Aristotle, *Eth. eud.* 12.49b20: τὸν θεὸν θεραπεύειν καὶ θεωρεῖν in *Aristotelis Ethica Eudemia*, ed. Richard R. Walzer and Jean M. Mingway (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 125.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Peters, *Greek Philosophical Terms*, 121–139; John Dillon, *The Middle Platonists: A Study of Platonism, 80 B.C. to A.D. 220* (London: Duckworth, 1977). For a detailed investigation of the ways Plato’s *Timaeus* inspired Philo, see David T. Runia’s *Philo of Alexandria and the “Timaeus” of Plato* (Leiden: Brill, 1986).

<sup>20</sup> For a scholarly investigation of the idea of divine sense (*nous/noesis*) in Christian authors, see Anna N. Williams, *The Divine Sense: The Intellect in Patristic Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007). Christian Hellenistic authors will take over the Platonic distinction between the noetic and the aisthetic and sometimes further develop it in such new theories as the famous Origenian doctrine of the five noetic senses. With no doubt, Christian patristic authors read Philo, and it is very plausible that the Alexandrian was one of the most (if not the most) important sources of inspiration regarding the application of the Greek philosophical language to theology. See, for instance, David T. Runia, *Philo in Early Christian Literature: A Survey* (Van Gorcum: Assen, 1993); idem, *Philo and the Church Fathers: A Collection of Papers* (Leiden: Brill, 1995).

## A. Philo

## A.1. Philo and the Emergence of the Noetic Turn in Jewish Thought

While Aristobulus reckoned that God is everywhere present in the universe and his power is manifested through all things (μόνος ὁ θεός ἐστι καὶ διὰ πάντων ἡ δύναμις αὐτοῦ φανερά γίνεται), the concepts of noetic world and noetic perception do not appear in the extant fragments attributed to him.<sup>21</sup> The noetic turn was simply not part of his mindset. When Aristobulus illustrates the human encounter with God and a *visio Dei*, he does not mention the noetic perception but rather describes the event as a luminous descent. Thus, he represents the paradigmatic Sinai theophany as a divine descent (κατάβασις θεία) and a fiery occurrence, gigantic, and everywhere present (διὰ πάντων μεγαλειότητα), without combusting the burning bush, nor anything on earth.<sup>22</sup> From an epistemological perspective, there is no indication that the spectators of this luminous theophany employed other epistemic capacities than their ordinary sight. Aristobulus informs the reader that not only Moses but the whole Hebrew people contemplated this energy of God (πάντες θεωρήσωσι τὴν ἐνέργειαν τοῦ θεοῦ),<sup>23</sup> all were witnesses of the great theophany (τὸ τοὺς συνορώντας ἐμφαντικῶς ἕκαστα καταλαμβάνειν).<sup>24</sup>

It is, however, in Philo's texts, in the first century CE, that we find for the first time a coherently developed noetic ontology and a noetic epistemology. Philo gives us the following definition of the intellect: "[F]or what the intellect (νοῦς) is in the soul, this is what the eye is in the body; for each of them sees (βλέπει), in the one case the objects of thought (τὰ νοητά), in the other the objects of perception (τὰ αἰσθητά)."<sup>25</sup> The intellect (also called reason, λόγος, in *Det.* 83 and *Post.* 53) is further described as a special gift (ἐξάριετον γέρας) from God (*Deus* 45; cf. 47), a fragment of the Deity (*Somn.* 1.34), a ruler of the soul, and a sort of god of the body (*Opif.* 69; *Agr.* 57). It is

<sup>21</sup> For Aristobulus, see Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 8.9.5. Aristobulus most likely borrowed the idea of a governing power from the *Orphic Sacred Discourse*, as one can see in *Praep. ev.* 13.12.4–5. Regarding the date of composition, A. Yarbro Collins suggests that “the later part of the reign of Philometor (155–145 BCE) thus seems to be the most likely date for the work of Aristobulus” (*OTP* 2:833). For an English translation, see A.Y. Collins, *OTP* 2:837–842.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.10.17. This descent does not have a particular location because God is everywhere (ὡστε τὴν κατάβασιν μὴ τοπικὴν εἶναι, πάντη γὰρ ὁ θεός ἐστιν; *ibid.* 8.10.12–14 [GCS 43/1:453]).

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.10.12.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.10.17.

<sup>25</sup> Philo, *Opif.* 53. Trans. Runia, 59. Philo also compares the *nous* with “the sight of the soul (ψυχῆς γὰρ ὄψις), illuminated by rays peculiar to itself” (*Deus* 46 [LCL Philo 3:32–33]).

the image of the divine and invisible being (i.e., God; *Plant.*18) and the only faculty through which we can perceive God (*Ebr.* 108). Its essence, however, remains unintelligible and unknown to us (*Mut.* 10). Operating with ontological and epistemological categories which come from Plato's *Timaeus* 27, Philo articulates a doctrine of the intellect as the power of the soul able to perceive, beyond the sensible universe, something of the noetic world. While deploring the impious doctrine of an unproductive God (a vast inactivity [πολλή ἀπραξία]) and defending the theory of a divine active cause (δραστήριον αἴτιον), which is the Mind of the universe (ὁ τῶν ὄλων νοῦς), the author uses the following distinctions:

But the great Moses considered that what is ungenerated (τὸ ἀγέννητον) was of a totally different order from that which was visible (ἄλλοτριώτατον τοῦ ὄρατοῦ), for the entire sense-perceptible realm (τὸ αἰσθητόν) is in a process of becoming and change (ἐν γενέσει καὶ μεταβολαίς) and never remains in the same state. So to what is invisible and intelligible (τῷ ἀοράτῳ καὶ νοητῷ) he assigned eternity (ἀιδιότητα) as being akin and related to it, whereas on what is sense-perceptible he ascribed the appropriate name becoming.<sup>26</sup>

The text confirms, therefore, that, according to Philo—who follows Plato—there are two worlds (the noetic and the aesthetic) and two corresponding epistemic capacities (the intellect [νοῦς] and the sense-perception [αἴσθησις]):

For God, because he is God, understood in advance that a beautiful copy (μίμημα) would not come into existence apart from a beautiful model (παραδείγματος), and that none of the objects of sense-perception (τι τῶν αἰσθητῶν) would be without fault, unless it was modeled (ἀπεικονίσθη) on the archetypal (ἀρχέτυπον) and intelligible idea (νοητὴν ἰδέαν). Therefore, when he had decided to construct this visible cosmos (τὸν ὄρατὸν κόσμον), he first marked out the intelligible cosmos (τὸν νοητόν), so that he could use it as a incorporeal and most god-like (ἄσωμάτῳ καὶ θεοειδестаτῳ) paradigm (παραδείγματι) and so produce the corporeal cosmos (τὸν σωματικόν), a younger likeness (ἀπεικόνισμα) of an older model, which would contain as many sense-perceptible kinds (αἰσθητά) as there were intelligible kinds (νοητά) in that other one. ... Then, taking up the imprints of each object in his own soul like in wax, he [i.e., the architect] carries around the intelligible city (νοητὴν πόλιν) as an image in his head. Summoning up the representations by means of his innate power of memory and engraving their features (τοὺς χαρακτῆρας) even more distinctly (on his mind), he begins, as a good builder, to construct the city out of stones and timber, looking at the model (τὸ παράδειγμα) and ensuring that the corporeal objects correspond to each of the incorporeal ideas (τῶν ἀσωμάτων ἰδεῶν).

<sup>26</sup> Philo, *Opif.* 12. Trans. Runia, 49.

The conception we have concerning God must be similar to this, namely that when he had decided to found the great cosmic city, he first conceived its outlines (τύπους). Out of these he composed the intelligible cosmos (κόσμον νοητόν), which served him as a model (παραδείγματι) when he completed the sense-perceptible cosmos (τὸν αἰσθητόν) as well.<sup>27</sup>

The noetic nature of the two agents of this double creation—God and his Logos—is also an intrinsic part of the Philonian theological scheme.<sup>28</sup> While God the Father is the real Demiurge (ποιητής; *Opif.* 21), his Logos plays the role of the “instrument” by which God creates the world (*Cher.* 127; *Abr.* 6) and also of the noetic “place,” in fact the very noetic cosmos, where God draws the intelligible or eidetic project of creation:

Just as the city that was marked out beforehand in the architect had no location (χώραν) outside, but had been engraved in the soul of the craftsman, in the same way the cosmos composed of the ideas (ὁ ἐκ τῶν ἰδεῶν κόσμος) would have no other place (τόπον) than the divine Logos (τὸν θεῖον λόγον) who gives these (ideas) their ordered disposition.<sup>29</sup> ... If you would wish to use a formulation that has been stripped down to essentials, you might say that the intelligible cosmos (νοητὸν κόσμον) is nothing else than the Logos of God as he is actually engaged in making the cosmos (θεοῦ λόγος ἤδη κοσμοποιούντος).<sup>30</sup>

The double creation theory and the idea that the noetic paradigms are “placed” within the Logos reappear in *De opificio* in a passage which calls the noetic world, in addition, incorporeal:

Now that the incorporeal cosmos (ἀσώματος κόσμος) had been completed and established in the divine Logos (ἐν τῷ θείῳ λόγῳ), the sense-perceptible cosmos (ὁ αἰσθητός) began to be formed as a perfect offspring, with the incorporeal serving as model (πρὸς παράδειγμα τούτου).<sup>31</sup>

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 16–19. Trans. Runia, 50. The same distinction is operative in other passages, for example *Leg.* 1.1 (LCL Philo 1:146–147): “For using symbolical language he [i.e., Moses] calls the mind (νοῦν) heaven, since heaven is the abode of natures discerned only by mind (αἰ νοηταὶ φύσεις), but sense-perception (αἴσθησιν) he calls earth, because sense-perception possesses a composition of a more earthly and body-like (σωματοειδῆ καὶ γεωδεστέραν) sort.”

<sup>28</sup> God himself is called the mind of the world (τοῦ τῶν ὄλων νοῦ) in several places, e.g. *Leg.* 3.29 (LCL Philo 1:320); *Abr.* 4 and 192 (LCL Philo 4:134, 244). Most likely, the idea appears for the first time in Thales, fr. A 23: νοῦν τοῦ κόσμου τὸν θεόν (*FV* 1:78).

<sup>29</sup> *Opif.* 20. Trans. Runia, 50–51.

<sup>30</sup> *Opif.* 24. Trans. Runia, 51.

<sup>31</sup> *Opif.* 36. Trans. Runia, 54. The term ‘incorporeal’ is also used as synonymous with ‘noetic’ in various other passages where Philo employs the term ‘invisible’ as synonymous with ‘noetic,’ e.g. *Opif.* 29. Trans. Runia, 53: “First, therefore, the maker made an incorporeal (ἀσώματων) heaven and an invisible (ἀόρατον) earth and a form of air and of the void (ἀέρος ἰδέαν καὶ κενού). To the former he assigned the name darkness, since the air is black by nature, to the latter the name abyss, because the void is indeed full of depths and gaping. He then

This passage is emblematic, since it confirms that the term “incorporeal” (ἀσώματος) does not refer to pure abstractions, to entities deprived completely of real existence. To the contrary, it obviously and repeatedly denotes a noetic type of existence. This existence is more subtle than sensible objects, although not completely immaterial.

The passage is equally significant as an illustration of the complex vision of the universe in Hellenistic times. According to the Alexandrian, the entire reality is actually constituted of various degrees of materiality and (im)material noetic levels. God is the mind of the universe and dwells noetically in his Logos. The divine Logos itself, as a noetic reality per se, is everywhere present in the visible universe through his two powers, which Philo calls either “goodness” and “authority” (*Cher.* 28), or “God” and “Lord” (*Mos.* 2.99). The author similarly asserts that a heavenly intelligible light is kindled before the sun and represents the source of light for all sensible luminaries: sun, moon, stars, planets, etc.<sup>32</sup> Unlike the luminaries, the heavenly light is perceptible only through the intellect. Nevertheless, this light does not seem to be a sheer Platonic Idea, an eidetic paradigm of every possible luminary, since it is a real substance which procures the visible light of all the luminaries.

Philo also conceives of certain mediating elements between the intelligible and sensible universes. These elements can trespass from one world into the other, especially from the immaterial into the material. In a certain way, they represent a revelation of the upper world. Morning and evening, for instance, although they cross the Limit or Boundary (*Horos*) of heaven and enter the sensible world, are described as incorporeal and noetic entities, since only the intellect can perceive them (*Opif.* 34). Likewise, intelligible air, which is the “breath of God,” and the aforementioned “intelligible light,” may change their subtle constitutions into heavier materialities and provide the air (that is, life) and the light of the visible world:

Both spirit (πνεῦμα) and light were considered deserving of a special privilege. The former he named of God, because spirit is highly important for life (ζωτικώτατον) and God is the cause of life. Light he describes as exceedingly beautiful, for the intelligible (τὸ νοητόν) surpasses the visible (τοῦ ὁρατοῦ) in

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made the incorporeal being (ἀσώματων οὐσίαν) of water and of spirit, and as seventh and last of all of light, which once again was incorporeal and was also the intelligible model (ἀσώματων ἦν καὶ νοητόν ... παράδειγμα) of the sun and all the other light-bearing stars which were to be established in heaven.”

<sup>32</sup> *Opif.* 33.

brilliance and brightness just as much, I believe, as sun surpasses darkness, day surpasses night, and intellect (νοῦς), which gives leadership to the entire soul, surpasses its sensible sources of information, the eyes of the body. That invisible and intelligible light (τὸ δὲ ἀόρατον καὶ νοητὸν φῶς) has come into being as image (εἰκῶν) of the divine Logos which communicated its genesis. It is a star that transcends the heavenly realm (ὑπερουράνιος ἀστήρ), source of the visible stars (πηγὴ τῶν αἰσθητῶν ἀστέρων), and you would not be off the mark to call it “allbrightness” (παναύγειαν). From it (ἀφ’ ἧς) the sun and moon and other planets and fixed stars draw (ἀρύττονται) the illumination (φέγγη) that is fitting for them in accordance with the capacity they each have. But the unmixed and pure gleam has its brightness (αὐγῆς) dimmed when it begins to undergo (τρέπεσθαι) a change from the intelligible to the sense-perceptible (κατὰ τὴν ἐκ νοητοῦ πρὸς αἰσθητὸν μεταβολήν), for none of the objects in the sense-perceptible realm is absolutely pure.<sup>33</sup>

A few epistemological remarks should be added to our discussion. As in certain biblical passages and the apocalyptic literature, Philo still maintains heaven as the preeminent geography of divine indwelling. The human being who intends to reach that realm has to ascend to the celestial heights (*Leg.* 1.1).<sup>34</sup> Nonetheless, in what concerns the epistemic access to the heavenly realm and the access to God, Philo advances a clearly innovative method: noetic perception, *noesis*. Additionally, while still conceiving of ascension as the favored method of accessing God, the Alexandrian alters the nature of this ascension. Instead of transportation to heaven, direct vision, dream vision, or other methods, he has the intellect perform the ascent.

<sup>33</sup> *Opif.* 30–31. Trans. Runia, 53. One should also keep in mind that stars were also heavenly beings, according to Philo, who criticized Anaxagoras’s theory that stars simply consist of fiery metal (*Somn.* 1.22; *Aet.* 47). They are living beings possessing minds (*Gig.* 60; *Plant.* 12; *Opif.* 73) and, more than that, divine souls (*Gig.* 8), divine natures (*Opif.* 144; *Prov.* 2.50; *QG* 4.188), and a host of visible gods (*Aet.* 46). For further discussions, see Alan Scott, *Origen and the Life of the Stars: A History of an Idea* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 63–75.

<sup>34</sup> In *Leg.* 1.1 Philo even affirms that the noetic natures are located in heaven, while the aisthetic ones are on earth. One of the conditions of possibility for the ascension to heaven is given by the Philonian assumption that the universe is arrayed as a ladder of elements, which is in fact a Stoic doctrine about the arrangement of the universe. As Allan Scott shows, Philo admits the Stoic doctrine about the array of the cosmic elements according to their weight: earth at the bottom, water above the earth, air above the water, and fire on the highest level. Fire, not ether, is the true substance of heaven. (See Scott, *Origen*, 66. Cf. *Aet.* 33; 115). The doctrine presents some contradictory points, since Philo also accepts the Peripatetic view—opposed to the Stoic one—according to which the ether is actually the substance of heaven (see *Her.* 87, 238; 240; 283; *Deus* 78; *Mut.* 179; *Somn.* 1.139; 145; *QG* 3.6). For the idea of mystical ascent in Philo, see for example Peter Borgen, *Philo of Alexandria, An Exegete for His Time* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 194–205; esp. chap. 11: “Illegitimate and Legitimate Ascents”.



According to the Philonian pedagogical curriculum, the propaedeutic exercise in arts and sciences (τέχνηναι καὶ ἐπιστήμῃναι) should be followed by the itinerary of the human mind within the noetic world.<sup>35</sup>

And when the intellect has observed in that realm the models and forms of the sense-perceptible things (αἰσθητῶν ... τὰ παραδείγματα καὶ τὰς ἰδέας) which it had seen here, objects of overwhelming beauty, it then, possessed by a sober drunkenness, becomes enthused like the Corybants. Filled with another longing and a higher form of desire, which has propelled it to the utmost vault of the intelligibles (τῶν νοητῶν), it thinks it is heading towards the Great King himself. But as it strains to see (ἰδεῖν), pure and unmixed beams (ἄκρατοι καὶ ἀμιγρεῖς ἀγυαί) of concentrated light (ἀθρόου φωτός) pour forth like a torrent, so that the eye of the mind (τὸ τῆς διανοίας ὄμμα), overwhelmed by the brightness (μαρμαρυγαίς), suffers from vertigo.<sup>36</sup>

The intellect is also involved in the ascetic preparation for the vision, an ancient idea which Philo re-exploits through the Stoic language of the fight between the *nous* and the passions.<sup>37</sup> The *visio Dei* supervenes as the consequence of the victory which the intellect wins over passions and pleasure:

And their warfare (πόλεμος) is patent. When mind (τοῦ νοῦ) is victorious, devoting itself to immaterial things (τοῖς νοητοῖς καὶ ἀσωμάτοις) its proper object, passion (τὸ πάθος) quits the scene: and on the other hand, when passion has won an evil victory, mind gives in, being prevented from giving heed to itself and to all its own occupations. Moses elsewhere says, "Whenever Moses lifted up his hands, Israel prevailed, but when he dropped them, Amalek prevailed" [Exod 17:11], showing that when the mind lifts itself up away from mortal things (ἀπὸ τῶν θνητῶν) and is borne aloft, that which sees God (τὸ ὁρῶν τὸν θεόν), which is Israel, gains strength ...<sup>38</sup>

According to Philo, the priests and the prophets, more than scientists and ordinary people, reach the highest level of humanity and become "born of God," an expression also connected with their capacity of accessing the noetic realm, because they

<sup>35</sup> E.g., *Congr.* 11–25. As the curriculum actually has to lead to the acquisition of philosophical knowledge, philosophy has to lead to wisdom, which is the science of divine and human things (ἐπιστήμη θεῶν καὶ ἀνθρωπίνων; *Congr.* 79 [LCL Philo 4:496]).

<sup>36</sup> *Opif.* 70–71. Trans. Runia, 64. Cf. *Leg.* 1.38. Beyond these passages where Philo ascribes the ascension to the mind (considered the most important part of the soul; *Opif.* 69), there are also passages where he talks about the ascent of the soul beyond heavens to God, e.g., *QE* 2.40, 47.

<sup>37</sup> See for instance the whole second book of the *Legum allegoriae*. The idea, however, has its Platonic formulations (for instance in *Cher.* 31), when the separation of the *nous* from the body is supposed to lead to the encounter with the divine.

<sup>38</sup> *Leg.* 3.186.

have risen wholly above the sphere of sense-perception (τὸ δὲ αἰσθητὸν πᾶν ὑπερκύψαντες) and have been translated into the world of the intelligible (εἰς τὸν νοητὸν κόσμον μετανέστησαν) and dwell there registered as freemen of the commonwealth of Ideas, which are imperishable and incorporeal (ἀφθάρτων καὶ ἀσωμάτων ιδεῶν πολιτεία).<sup>39</sup>

### A.2. *Philo and the Intellect as Mystery Operator*

As seen above, previous scholars have shown that the revelation of heavenly mysteries represents an essential feature of Jewish apocalyptic literature.<sup>40</sup> We have seen in the third part that Benjamin Gladd argues that this paradigm of thought begins with the biblical book of Daniel and that mystery idiom in apocalyptic materials is usually connected with three epistemic capacities specialized in perceiving the heavenly and eschatological mysteries of God, namely, with the “true” eye, ear, and heart, in contradistinction with the ordinary eye, ear, and heart.<sup>41</sup> Philo preserves the tradition of understanding mysteries as heavenly secrets and translates its vocabulary into philosophical language, operating once again a noetic turn from the biblical parlance. Now, the epistemic capacity which Philo deems appropriate to explore the divine mysteries is the *nous*, the noetic perception.

The Alexandrian is among the few Jewish authors to make use in a more extensive way of mystery terminology.<sup>42</sup> Some of his lines, on the one hand, are fully reprimanding mystery religions:

Furthermore, he banishes from the sacred legislation (ἐκ τῆς ἱεράς ἀναιρεῖ νομοθεσίας) the lore of occult rites and mysteries (τὰ περὶ τελετᾶς καὶ μυστήρια)

<sup>39</sup> *Gig.* 61.

<sup>40</sup> See Bornkamm, “Μυστήριον,” 821; Rowland, *Open Heaven*, 14; Bockmuehl, *Revelation and Mysteries*, 31–32; Gladd, *Revealing the Mysterion*. They make extensive investigations on the concepts of *raz*, *sar*, and *mysterion* in Daniel, sapiential literature, apocalyptic and Qumran texts, Aristobulus, Artapanus, the *Orphica*, Pseudo-Phocylides, Philo, Josephus, and early rabbinic literature. While the origins of these terms are Babylonian and Greek, they denote—in almost all these Jewish sources—a divine or heavenly secret revealed to human knowledge. Bockmuehl, for instance, defines “mystery” in the following terms: “By ‘Mystery’ is meant any reality of divine or heavenly origin specifically characterized as hidden, secret, or otherwise inaccessible to human knowledge” (*Revelation and Mystery*, 2).

<sup>41</sup> Gladd, *Revealing the Mysterion*, 274–277. There are also some biblical references where this type of epistemic sensory language is also used in connection with the knowledge of God, e.g., Deut 29:4; 28:45; Isa 6:9–10; Jer 5:21; Ezek 12:2 (ibid.). They are directly connected with the idea of mystery of the kingdom, for instance in Matt 13:9–13.

<sup>42</sup> The story of *Joseph and Aseneth* should also be mentioned due to the presence of various mystery terminologies which echo the mysteries of Isis. For a contemporary analysis, see, for instance, Randall D. Chesnutt, *From Death to Life: Conversion in Joseph and Aseneth* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 218–253.

and all such imposture and buffoonery. He would not have those who were bred in such a commonwealth as ours take part in mummeries and clinging on to mystic fables (μυστικῶν πλασμάτων ἐκκρεμαμένους ὀλιγωρεῖν ἀληθείας) despise the truth and pursue things which have taken night and darkness for their province, discarding what is fit to bear the light of day. Let none, therefore, of the followers and disciples of Moses either confer or receive initiation to such rites (μήτε τελείτω μήτε τελείσθω). For both in teacher and taught such action is gross sacrilege (καὶ τὸ διδάσκειν καὶ τὸ μανθάνειν τελετὰς οὐ μικρὸν ἀνοσιούργημα).<sup>43</sup>

In many other pages, on the other hand, Philo applies Greek mystery-terminology directly to the Jewish liturgical or mystical practices. In *De specialibus legibus* 3.40, for example, he calls Jewish rituals τὰ ἱερά (the sacred rites) or τελεταί (initiations).<sup>44</sup> In *De sacrificiis* 60–63 he also considers that lesser mysteries are a metaphor for the passage (“Passover”) from obedience under passions to contemplation and from the transitory and created being to God. Greater mysteries, as shown in *Legum allegoriae* 3.100 or *De cherubim* 49, refer to the knowledge of God’s secrets, and it is in this second sense that Philo frequently employs the word μυστήριον as well as other mystery terminology.<sup>45</sup> The secret dimension may also refer to the fact that the person who enjoyed a certain religious experience keeps that for himself or herself (*Sacr.* 60). Moreover, hierophants are not only Abraham and Moses (for example, *Post.* 173; *Cher.* 49; *Mos.* 2.71), but also Philo himself and his initiated audience.<sup>46</sup>

Nonetheless, what Philo calls “mysteries” cannot be taken in the proper sense of the word. Arthur Nock already observed that Jewish rites cannot be rigorously described as mystery rites. They were bereft of several essential mystery elements, such as the rites of initiation and the secret meals, and

<sup>43</sup> *Spec.* 1.319. Cf. *Cher.* 94–95; *Spec.* 3.40.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. *Leg.* 1.104; *Contempl.* 25.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. *Leg.* 3.3; 27; 71; 219; *Cher.* 42–49; *Sacr.* 60; *Gig.* 54; *Deus.* 61; *Somn.* 1.164; *Mos.* 2.71; *QG* 2.17.

<sup>46</sup> Philo describes himself as “initiated (μυηθείς) under Moses the God-beloved into his greater mysteries (τὰ μεγάλα μυστήρια)” (*Cher.* 49). His audience was also one of initiated people, e.g., *Leg.* 3.219: “Therefore, O ye initiate (μύσται), open your ears wide and take in holiest teachings (τελετὰς ἱερωτάτας).” Cf. *Fug.* 85, *Cher.* 48; *Spec.* 1.320. Philo also portrays the therapeutae as “initiated into the mysteries of the sanctified life (τὰ τοῦ σεμνοῦ βίου μυστήρια τελούνται)” (*Contempl.* 25 [LCL Philo 9:126–127]), and compares them with the ecstatic members of mystery religions in their attempt to see God (*Contempl.* 11–12 [LCL Philo 9:118]). The initiation into the highest mysteries (τῶν τελείων) is also connected with the vision of God in *Sacr.* 60.

even Philo deplored the fact that they were occasionally disclosed.<sup>47</sup> The fact was well known within the Jewish world of antiquity, and Josephus, unlike Philo, took pride in the fact that Jewish religious rites and precepts were not secret but public.<sup>48</sup>

If Philo's mystery terminology does not denote genuine mysteries, is it sheer metaphor and a mere *façon de parler*?<sup>49</sup> I would conjecture that his mystery terminology involves an ontological reference, a real thing, and this reference should be rather understood within the context of the fundamental distinction between the aisthetic and noetic realms, between the visible and invisible worlds. Thus, Philo's mystery refers to the hidden and invisible noetic realm into which participants have to transpass. The mystery universe refers, therefore, to the noetic domain of God, of his angels, and his glorious light. The great mysteries of God, which have Abraham and Moses as key initiates, actually denote a mystical method where the intellect can access God's noetic world. Accordingly, the *nous* is the capacity able to perceive the mysterious realities of the hidden realm. For Philo, the intellect is highly involved in the process of initiation and embodies, in fact, the central faculty of initiation: "[T]he mind (νοῦς) soars aloft and is being initiated in the mysteries (τὰ τοῦ κυρίου μυστήρια μῦηται) of the Lord."<sup>50</sup> Once

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<sup>47</sup> See Arthur D. Nock, "The Question of Jewish Mysteries," *Gn* 13 (1937): 156–165, esp. 161–163; repr. in *Essays on Religion and the Ancient World*, ed. Zeph Stewart (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), 459–468; idem, "Hellenistic Mysteries and Christian Sacraments," *Mnemosyne: A Journal of Classical Studies* 5:3 (1952): 177–213. Cf. Morton Smith, "Goodenough's *Jewish Symbols* in Retrospect," *JBL* 86 (1967): 53–68; Valentin Nikiprowetzky, *Le commentaire de l'Écriture chez Philon d'Alexandrie: Son caractère et sa portée: Observations philologiques*, ALGHJ 11 (Leiden: Brill, 1977), 14–21; Gary Lease, "Jewish Mystery Cults since Goodenough," *ANRW* 2.20.2 (1987): 858–861; Borgen, *Philo of Alexandria*, 1–5. These authors develop their positions against the thesis regarding the existence of Jewish mysteries, particularly defended by Goodenough in *By Light Light*, 6–10 and *Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1953–1968) as well as by other previous authors, e.g., Hans Leisegang, *Pneuma Hagion: Der Ursprung d. Geistbegriffs der synoptischen Evangelien aus der griechischen Mystik* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1922).

<sup>48</sup> See especially C. Ap. 2.107 (*neque mysteriorum aliquorum ineffabilem agitur*), in *Flavius Josephus: Contre Apion*, ed. T. Reinach (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1930), 76. For an English translation, see *Josephus*, 9 vols., trans. H.S.J. Thackeray, LCL 186 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1926). See also *A.J.* 16.43 (LCL Josephus 8:224) for the secretless nature of the Jewish precepts and *A.J.* 1.11 for the idea that Jewish tradition does not keep secret any of the good things (μηδὲν ἔχειν τῶν καλῶν ἀπόρρητον; *Flavius Josephus: Les Antiquités Juives, Livres I à III*, 2 vols., ed. É. Nodet [Paris: Cerf, 1990], 1:4). For a more detailed discussion, see Bockmuehl, *Revelation and Mystery*, 89–92.

<sup>49</sup> See, for instance, Nock, "Question," 163–164, and Lease, "Jewish Mystery Cults."

<sup>50</sup> *Leg.* 3.71.

consecrated, the mind becomes a minister and servant (ιερωμένην διάνοιαν λειτουργόν και θεραπευτρίδα) of God who does everything that delights the master.<sup>51</sup>

Long before Philo, Plato was the first to compare the ascent of the mind and the noetic vision of the Ideas with the luminous experience which the initiates in mysteries gain at the climactic point of their initiation.<sup>52</sup> In a similar fashion, Philo compares the journey which the intellect undertakes into the noetic realm with an initiation into the divine mysteries. While commenting on the Passover narrative of Exodus 12, Philo avers that the term “passover” (understood as “passage”) actually refers to those who overcome the realm of passions and, thus, may reach a comprehension of God through his works in creation (*Leg.* 3.94–99).<sup>53</sup> There is, in addition, an even more advanced stage of mystery initiation, namely, that of the direct vision of God through the *nous*:

There is a mind (νοῦς) more perfect and more thoroughly cleansed, which has undergone initiation into the great mysteries (τὰ μέγαρα μυστήρια μυηθείς), a mind which gains its knowledge of the First Cause (τὸ αἴτιον γνωρίζει) not from created things (οὐκ ἀπὸ τῶν γεγονότων), as one may learn the substance from the shadow (ἀπὸ σκιάς), but lifting its eyes above and beyond creation (ὑπερκύψας τὸ γενητόν) obtains a clear vision of the uncreated One (ἔμφασιν ἐναργή τοῦ ἀγενήτου), so as from Him to apprehend both Himself and His shadow (ἀπ αὐτοῦ αὐτόν καταλαμβάνειν και τὴν σκιάν αὐτοῦ). To apprehend that was, we saw, to apprehend both the Word and this world. The mind of which I speak is Moses who says, “Manifest (Ἐμφάνισόν) Thyself to me, let me see Thee that I may know Thee” [Exod. 33:13]; ‘for I would not that Thou shouldst be manifested (ἐμφανισθείης) to me by means of heaven or earth or water or air or any created thing at all (τινος ἀπλῶς τῶν ἐν γενέσει), nor would I find the reflection of Thy being (τὴν σὴν ιδέαν) in aught else than in Thee Who art God, for the reflections in created things are dissolved (αἱ γὰρ ἐν γενητοῖς ἐμφάσεις διαλύονται), but those in the Uncreate (αἱ δὲ ἐν τῷ ἀγενήτῳ) will continue abiding and sure and eternal.’<sup>54</sup>

In *De gigantibus*, Philo similarly describes in mystery terms the paradigmatic theophany of the Bible, namely, Moses’ vision on Sinai. However,

<sup>51</sup> *Post.* 184.

<sup>52</sup> See Diotima’s discourse in *Symposium* 210a–e. Cf. Hans Lewy, *Chaldaean Oracles and Theurgy: Mysticism, Magic and Platonism in the later Roman Empire*, 2nd ed. Michel Tardieu (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1978), 176.

<sup>53</sup> See also *Sacr.* 63 for the definition of the Passover as the passage from passions to the practice of virtue (τὴν ἐκ παθῶν εἰς ἀσκησιν ἀρετῆς διάβασιν) and *Sacr.* 62 for the idea that this passage represents the “lesser mysteries” (τὰ μικρὰ μυστήρια).

<sup>54</sup> *Leg.* 3.100–101.

the entire process illustrated through these terms does not involve mystery rites, but Moses' mystical experience explained as a passage from bodily and sensible world—including sensible thought, the judgment (γνώμη)—to the invisible:

So too Moses pitched his own tent outside the camp [Exod. 33:7] and the whole array of bodily things, that is, he set his judgment (γνώμην) where it should be removed. Then only does he begin to worship God and entering the darkness, the invisible region (τὸν γνόφον, τὸν ἀειδῆ χώρον), abides there while he learns the secrets of the most holy mysteries (τελούμενος τὰς ἱερωτάτας τελετάς). There he becomes not only one of the congregation of the initiated (μύστης), but the hierophant and teacher of divine rites (ιεροφάντης ὀργίων καὶ διδάσκαλος θείων), which he will impart to those whose ears are purified (κεκαθαρμένοις).<sup>55</sup>

Philo also expounds on the spiritual experiences of the therapeutae, making obvious use of mystery vocabulary as well as of the Platonic distinction between the sensible sun of the sky and the sun of the noetic world, which is the Good or Being:<sup>56</sup>

But it is well that the Therapeutae, a people always taught from the first to use their sight (βλέπειν), should desire the vision of the Existent (τῆς τοῦ ὄντος θεάς) and soar above the sun or our senses (τὸν αἰσθητὸν ἥλιον) and never leave their place in this company which carries them on to perfect happiness (εὐδαιμονίαν). And those who set themselves to this service, not just following custom nor the advice and admonition of others but carried away by a heaven-sent passion of love (ὑπ' ἔρωτος ἀρπασθέντες οὐρανοῦ), remain rapt and possessed (ἐνθουσιάζουσι) like bacchanals or corybants until they see the object of their yearning (τὸ ποθοῦμενον ἴδωσιν).<sup>57</sup>

Philo's mystery terminology, therefore, does not constitute a sheer metaphor, but it refers to the mystical, interior, and noetic passage from the visible to the invisible, from the aesthetic to the noetic universes. In Philo's mystico-philosophical theorization, mystery initiation is not a mystery rite per se but another name for the contemplative or mystical method of transcending the sensible realm to the intelligible. His use of mystery language may be regarded, therefore, as an ascetico-mystical procedure of accessing something hidden, *mystikos*, pertaining to the noetic world.

<sup>55</sup> *Gig.* 54.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. Plato, *Rep.* 507b–509c; see also 514a–520a for the famous allegory of the cave. Unlike Plato, who defines the Good as beyond being (ἐπέκεινα τῆς οὐσίας; *Rep.* 509 b), Philo accepts the Middle Platonist assimilation between Good and Being.

<sup>57</sup> Philo, *Contempl.* 11–12.

### B. *Mystery Epistemology in the Corpus Hermeticum*

The Hermetic corpus represents one of the earliest illustrations of noetic epistemology. While recalling the difference between the ontology of *Poimandres* and the rest of the Hermetic corpus, I would like to point out the distinction between their epistemologies and methods of reaching the vision of God. While in *Poimandres* the method is the traditional *ascension*, in the rest of the Corpus it is *initiation*. To a certain extent, the narrative of *Poimandres* logically leads to the solution of ascension, since the general story concerning the divine Anthropos follows the Enochic narrative of the fallen watchers. Willing to know more about creation, the Anthropos looks from heaven through the firmament and contemplates Nature and his own form reflected in her waters. In a sort of cosmic narcissistic episode, he falls in love with his reflected form, the beautiful shape of God reflected in the waters of Nature.<sup>58</sup> He descends afterward and, together with Nature, generates the seven androgynous *anthropoi*. Caught in the structure of Nature, the Anthropos “became a slave within it,” although preserving his immortal condition.<sup>59</sup> The narrative structure follows in general lines the myth of the fall of the Watchers enamored of the daughters of men and imprisoned in the realm under the sky. In the context of such a narrative of descent, the logical solution is ascension, the return to heaven, a feature which *Poimandres* follows, although employing a different language. Thus, *Poimandres* teaches Hermes to separate himself from passion and carnal senses and rise up through the cosmic framework which the Anthropos had crossed. Hermes should continue his ascension and overpass the seven zones of heaven in order to access the ogdoad.<sup>60</sup> It is there that he will join the powers who extol God and, as in an apocalyptic narrative, he will undertake transformation. We are also informed that human beings who reach that heavenly liturgy become one with the powers (δυνάμεις γενόμενοι), enter God, and finally receive knowledge and be deified (θεωθῆναι).<sup>61</sup> The structure of this account is undoubtedly apocalyptic.

The epistemology of *Poimandres*, however, is more complex, since it involves the Delphic-Socratic *gnothi seauton*, an element also present in the rest of the tractates. Only the saint, the good, the pure, the charitable,

<sup>58</sup> *Poim.* 14.

<sup>59</sup> *Poim.* 15.

<sup>60</sup> *Poim.* 24–26: “Thence the human being rushes up through the cosmic framework (ἀρμονία).”

<sup>61</sup> *Poim.* 26.

and the pious receive the visitation of the *Nous* and, thus, the gift of the intellect.<sup>62</sup> And only the one who possesses an intellect becomes an intelligible anthropos (ἔννοους ἄνθρωπος) knowing himself as life and light, which are God's presence in him/her.<sup>63</sup> In this way s/he knows God, who is life and light, and may start the aforementioned ascension.

The rest of the corpus construes a different epistemology. While *Tractate* 10 equates God with the Father and the Good (10.2;3;9,14), it also describes the vision of the Good as a perception of a noetic light with the eye of the intellect:

"You have filled us with a vision (θέας), father, which is good and very beautiful, and my mind's eye (ὁ τοῦ νοῦ ὀφθαλμός) is almost {blinded} in such a vision (θέας)." "Yes, but the vision of the good (ἡ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ θέα) is not like the ray of the sun which, because it is fiery, dazzles the eyes with light and makes them shut. On the contrary, it illuminates (ἐκλάμπει) to the extent that one capable of receiving the influence of intellectual splendor (ἐπεισορήν τῆς νοητῆς λαμπηδόνας) can receive it. ... But we are still too weak now for this sight (ὄψιν); we are not yet strong enough to open our mind's eyes (τοὺς τοῦ νοῦ ὀφθαλμούς) and look (θεάσασται) on the incorruptible, incomprehensible beauty of that good (τὸ κάλλος τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ἐκείνου τὸ ἀφθαρτον, τὸ ἄληπτον). In the moment when you have nothing to say about it, you will see (ὄψει) it, for the knowledge (γνώσις) of it is divine silence (θεία σιωπή) and suppression of all the senses (καταργία πασῶν τῶν αἰσθησέων)."<sup>64</sup>

Vision requires, therefore, surmounting all ordinary capacities of perception and acquiring a new epistemic ability, noetic perception. Light and life are two essential attributes of the Good and Father, and they are perceivable only through the *nous*.<sup>65</sup> *Tractate* 5 makes the distinction between that which is eternal and non-manifested (τὸ ἀφανές) and the things of ordinary knowledge. Ordinary knowledge functions on the basis of images or representations (φαντασίαι) of manifested things (τὰ φαινόμενα), belonging therefore to the realm of becoming and temporality. Hence, representation is a matter concerning only the things in the domain of becoming (ἡ γὰρ

<sup>62</sup> *Poim.* 22.

<sup>63</sup> *Poim.* 21: ὁ ἔννοους ἄνθρωπος ἀναγνωρισάτω ἑαυτόν. The text allows us also know that this knowledge has a noetic nature; e.g., *Poim* 21: "The one who perceives himself noetically advances towards himself:" ὁ νοήσας ἑαυτὸν εἰς αὐτὸν χωρεῖ. My translation.

<sup>64</sup> *Tract.* 10.4–5. The term ἐπεισορή here translated through "influence" can equally be rendered through "effluence" or "influx." The idea of a luminous procession harks back to Plato (*Rep.* 6.508b–e; 7.517a–c) and *Wis* 7:25. Cf. *Tract.* 7.2; 10.5. *Nóησις* is also described through the metaphor of the "eyes of the heart" (τοῖς τῆς καρδίας ὀφθαλμοῖς) in *Tract.* 4.11.

<sup>65</sup> E.g., *Asclep.* 41: "We have known you, the vast light perceived only by reason (*lumen maximum solo intellectu sensibile*)."



φαντασία μόνων τῶν γεννητῶν ἐστίν); therefore, becoming is nothing else but representation (οὐδὲν γὰρ ἐστὶν ἢ φαντασία ἢ γένεσις).<sup>66</sup>

Moreover, as the mind produces the representations of ordinary knowledge, while remaining unseen and not manifested, God brings all the forms of the universe into being while remaining unbegotten, non represented, and non manifested (ἀγέννητος, ἀφαντασίστος, ἀφανής).<sup>67</sup> There is, in this way, a domain of knowledge beyond representation and becoming. It is the knowledge of God. Because the intellect is akin to God, it is the only capacity appropriate for this type of elevated knowledge:

[A]sk him the grace to enable you to understand (νοῆσαι) so great a god, to permit even one ray of his to illuminate your thinking (τῇ σῇ διανοίᾳ ἐκλάμψαι). Only understanding (νόησις), because it, too, is invisible (non manifested, ἀφανῆς οὐσα), sees the invisible (non manifested, τὸ ἀφανές), and if you have the strength, Tat, your mind's eye (τοῖς τοῦ νοῦ ὀφθαλμοῖς) will see it (φανήσεται).<sup>68</sup>

According to the tractates, God is everywhere in the universe: “god surrounds everything and permeates everything (ὁ μὲν θεὸς περι πάντα καὶ διὰ πάντων).”<sup>69</sup> The access to this ultimate object of contemplation—located not in heaven but everywhere in the universe—is no longer ascension. The Hermetic corpus proposes two new strategies of access: first, noetic vision, an epistemic capacity penetrating beyond the veil of materiality and able to perceive realities from a realm of a more refined substance; second, mystery initiation.

I submit that they represent a fundamental epistemological turn in Late Antiquity and two essential features also present in the pre-Nicene paschal writings.<sup>70</sup> Since God is everywhere present in the universe, ascension does not make sense anymore. Instead, the Hellenistic mindset advances two new epistemic capacities: the noetic perception (finding its roots in the Greek philosophical tradition) and mystery initiation (found in the Greek and the larger Hellenistic religiosity). These two epistemic features will remain essential for early Christian authors and will continue to exist throughout the Middle Ages.

<sup>66</sup> *Tract.* 5.1.

<sup>67</sup> *Tract.* 5.2.

<sup>68</sup> *Tract.* 5.2.

<sup>69</sup> *Tract.* 12.14. Cf. 12.20: “god, who is energy and power, surrounds everything and permeates everything.”

<sup>70</sup> Early paschal texts thus represent a *kabod* theology where ascension is mainly replaced by initiation and the passage into the noetic and mystery realm.

Nonetheless, if they come together in the same text, they operate as quasi-synonyms, denoting two different epistemic aspects of the same spiritual journey: the noetic and the initiatic. *Tractate 13* will be a suited illustration of how the two languages intermingle in order to express, in fact, the same spiritual advance of the *nous* into God. Understanding initiation as “regeneration” (παλιγγενεσία), a traditional mystery notion, the Hermetic corpus expounds in reverent terms about a “doctrine of regeneration” and a special modality of conveyance for this doctrine, which Hermes Trismegistus follows thoroughly while passing it on to Tat.<sup>71</sup> *Tractate 13* is equally called a λόγος ἀπόκρυφος, an expression echoing the famous ἱεροὶ λόγοι of the mystery cults with their double function of transmitting and elucidating the mystery. The tractate ends with a hymn of regeneration, which is also a secret hymnody (ὕμνωδία κρυπτή).<sup>72</sup>

As in mystery religions, the sacred logos is associated with two mystery processes: a first stage of *purification* and a second stage of *perfection*, where the neophyte contemplates the divine light and undergoes transformation. The master instructs his disciple first to leave behind senses and things regarding matter in order to perceive that domain which is more subtle than sensible objects. It is here that noetic epistemology finds its way into this mystery discourse:

“If something is not hard, not moist, not volatile, how can you understand (νοήσεις) it through senses (αἰσθητῶς)—something understood only through its power and energy (τὸ μόνον δυνάμει καὶ ἐνεργείᾳ νοούμενον) yet requiring one empowered to understand the birth in god (τὴν ἐν θεῷ γένεσιν).” “Am I without the power (ἀδύνατος), then, father?” “May it not be so, my child. Draw it to you, and it will come. Wish it, and it happens. Leave the senses of the body (κατάργησον τοῦ σώματος τὰς αἰσθήσεις) idle, and the birth of divinity (γένεσις τῆς θεότητος) will begin. Cleanse yourself (κάθαραι σεαυτὸν) of the irrational torments of matter (ἀπὸ τῶν ἀλόγων τῆς ὕλης τιμωριῶν).”<sup>73</sup>

<sup>71</sup> See the doctrine of regeneration (τὸν τῆς παλιγγενεσίας λόγον) in *Tract. 13.1*; the mode of regeneration (τῆς παλιγγενεσίας τὴν τρόπον) in *Tract. 13.3*; the transmission of regeneration (τῆς παλιγγενεσίας τὴν παράδοσιν) in *Tract. 13.22*. For the idea that initiation is regeneration, see *Tract. 13.13;7;10;16;22*.

<sup>72</sup> *Tract. 13.17–22*. *Tractate 14* also displays mystery terminologies and the mystery mindset of the Hermetic intellectual context. While Tat is portrayed as a neophyte, Asclepius is considered more advanced and prepared to receive the same ideas in “a more mystical interpretation (μυστικώτερον αὐτὰ ἐρμηνεύσας), suitable to someone of your greater age and learning in the nature of things (ἐπιστήμονι τῆς φύσεως).” *Tract. 14.1*. The fifth discourse of the corpus clearly affirms that Tat has to become an initiate (μὴ ἀμύητος ᾖς); *Tract. 5.1*.

<sup>73</sup> *Tract. 13.6–7*. The concepts of power (δύναμις) and energy (ἐνέργεια) play the role of divine titles in *Tractate 13*, together with the Good, the Truth, the One, and the Whole; cf. *Tract. 12.20* and *13.18*.

Hermes further composes a catalog of twelve “irrational torments of matter” which have to be driven out of the human being: ignorance, grief, incontinence, lust, injustice, greed, deceit, envy, treachery, anger, recklessness, and malice.<sup>74</sup>

Regeneration in its full meaning belongs to the second stage of the spiritual progression, which is perfection. Noetic epistemological terminology is also inserted into discussion at this stage of initiation. The neophyte goes out of himself and enters the *Nous*.<sup>75</sup>

Seeing (ὄρων) {} within me an unfabricated vision (ἄπλασματον θέαν) that came from the mercy of god, I went out of myself (ἐμαυτὸν ἐξελήλυθα) into an immortal body, and now I am not what I was before. I have been born in mind (ἐγεννήθην ἐν νῶ).<sup>76</sup>

The author describes the process as well as God’s descent together with ten divine powers (the decade) and deems deification as the fulfillment of this spiritual evolution:

“My child, you have come to know the means of rebirth. The arrival of the decade sets in order a birth of mind (νοηρὰ γένεσις) that expels the twelve; we have been divinized (ἐθεώθημεν) by this birth. Therefore, whoever through mercy has attained this godly birth and has forsaken bodily sensation (τὴν σωματικὴν αἴσθησιν) recognizes himself as constituted of the intelligibles [i.e. the powers] and rejoices.” “Since god has made me tranquil, father, I no longer picture things with the sight of my eyes (οὐχ ὁράσει ὀφθαλμῶν) but with the mental energy that comes through the powers (τῇ διὰ δυνάμεων νοητικῇ ἐνεργείᾳ).”<sup>77</sup>

Hermetic materials conceive of this transformation as an ontological change from the sensible body to the essential one, endowed with noetic powers:

“Tell me, father, does this body constituted of powers (τὸ σῶμα τοῦτο τὸ ἐκ δυνάμεων συνεστὸς) ever succumb to dissolution.” “Hold your tongue; do not give voice to the impossible! Else you will do wrong, and your mind’s eye (ὁ ὀφθαλμὸς τοῦ νοῦ) will be profaned. The sensible body of nature (τὸ αἰσθητὸν τῆς φύσεως σῶμα) is far removed from essential generation (τῆς οὐσιωδοῦς γενέσεως).”<sup>78</sup>

<sup>74</sup> *Tract.* 13.7.

<sup>75</sup> This realm is also called by the traditional Platonic term ‘noetic world’ (κόσμος νοητός), as in *Tract.* 13.21. The goal of this process is also called the ‘knowledge of God’ (γνώσις θεοῦ) in *Tract.* 13.8.

<sup>76</sup> *Tract.* 13.3.

<sup>77</sup> *Tract.* 13.10–11. For the decade of noetic powers, see *Tract.* 13.12.

<sup>78</sup> *Tract.* 13.14. A similar perspective occurs in *Tract.* 13.2. For the distinction between corporeal and essential (οὐσιώδης), the latter denoting the invisible dimension of the human

A similar perspective occurs in *Tractate* 13.2, a passage also emphasizing the deification of the initiated:

“And whence comes the begotten (ὁ γεννώμενος), father? He does not share in my essence (οὐσίας).” “The begotten will be of a different kind, a god (θεός) and a child of god (θεοῦ παῖς), the all in all (τὸ πᾶν ἐν παντί), composed entirely of the powers (ἐκ πασῶν δυνάμεων συνεστώς).”<sup>79</sup>

The following passage shows that the Hermetic corpus envisions the faculty of the intellect as a divine gift offered as an award to a few:

God shared reason (λόγον) among all people, O Tat, but not mind (νοῦν), though he begrudged it to none. ... All those who heeded the proclamation (τοῦ κηρύγματος) and immersed themselves in mind (ἐβαπτίσαντο τοῦ νοός) participated in knowledge (τῆς γνώσεως) and became perfect (τέλειοι) people because they received mind (τὸν νοῦν δεξάμενοι). But those who missed the point of the proclamation are people of reason because they did not receive (the gift of) mind (τὸν νοῦν μὴ προσειληφόντες) as well .... But those who participate in the gift that comes from god (τῆς ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ δωρεᾶς), O Tat, are immortal rather than mortal if one compares their deeds, for in a mind of their own they comprehended all (πάντα ἐμπεριλάβόντες τῷ ἑαυτῶν νοῷ).<sup>80</sup>

Hermes further mentions a particular science of the intellect (ἡ τοῦ νοῦ ἐπιστήμη) which consists of understanding or perceiving God noetically (ἡ τοῦ θεοῦ κατανόησις).<sup>81</sup> The ultimate goal of this science is the vision of God as the Good, of which essential attribute is luminosity.<sup>82</sup>

As we have seen above, important *kabod* texts of the Bible, such as Ezek 1:26, play a constitutive role in the theoretical articulation of the Hermetic vision of God. In addition to this, philosophical features from Plato, Platonism, and Middle Platonism are even more obvious contributors to this theorization. We may conclude at this point that the Hermetic texts, alongside Philo's writings, constitute a milestone of human culture. They represent the most ancient witnesses of the synthesis between the *kabod* theology and noetic epistemology. The assumed Platonic ontology of the two realms

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being, see *Tract.* 1.15 or *Asclep.* 8, where it is commensurated with the human part shaped according to the image of God.

<sup>79</sup> *Tract.* 13.2. Cf. *Poim.* 26; *Tract.* 10.24; 10.25; 12.1.

<sup>80</sup> *Tract.* 4.3–5. Cf. *Poim.* 22 and *Asclep.* 7: *illum intellegentiae diuinum.* *Poim.* 26 also considers that the final stage of those who ascended to the Father, became heavenly powers, and entered God is possession of knowledge (γνώσις) and deification (θεωθῆναι).

<sup>81</sup> *Tract.* 4.6.

<sup>82</sup> The identity between God and the Good is a central feature of the Hermetic tractates. Likewise, the luminous nature of God and the Good represents one of the emblematic aspects of these texts. See also *Poim.* 21 which defines God the Father as light and life.

triggered, as well, Plato's epistemology distinguishing between noetic and ordinary perception and characterized the vision of the *kabod* as noetic. Philo and the Hermetic corpus are the first to witness the epistemological shift from contemplating the *kabod* through ordinary seeing to apprehending it through the noetic capacities of the mind.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

### THE NOETIC ANTHROPOS OF THE PRE-NICENE PASCHAL TEXTS

It was in this Hellenistic context, experiencing profound changes in terms of linguistic and epistemological categories, that Melito, Pseudo-Hippolytus, and Origen construed their visions about the nature of the divine manifestations and the human capacities able to perceive the manifestations. In this chapter we will see that the paschal authors defined Jesus' divine dimension not only by means of biblical language but also by qualifying it as noetic, pneumatic, and "rational." Hence, they did not describe the ontological status of the Divine Anthropos in a sensible way, as an ordinary object pertaining to the visible universe, but conceived of him as a noetic reality.

#### 1. MELITO AND THE NOETIC PERCEPTION OF PRE-INCARNATE JESUS

A passage from Melito, *Peri Pascha* 82, indicates us that the Sardisean expresses the idea of divine vision while using the verb εἶδεν, which is undoubtedly a term referring to a theophanic vision, according to biblical and pseudepigraphic materials. The text continues with the verb νοεῖν and a description of Jesus Christ's pre-incarnate condition as the Firstborn of God, Morning Star, and a few demiurgic titles such as the "one who stretched out the firmament" and the "one who formed the universe:"

But you were found not really to be Israel, for you did not see God (οὐ γὰρ εἶδες τὸν θεόν), you did not recognize the Lord (οὐκ ἐνόησας τὸν κύριον), you did not know, O Israel, that this one was the firstborn of God (οὐκ ᾔδεις, ὦ Ἰσραήλ, ὅτι οὐτός [ἐστίν] ὁ πρωτότοκος τοῦ θεοῦ), the one who was begotten before the morning star, the one who caused the light to shine forth, the one who made bright the day, the one who parted the darkness, the one who established the primordial starting point, the one who suspended the earth, the one who quenched the abyss, the one who stretched out the firmament, the one who formed the universe.<sup>1</sup>

In conclusion, in the case Melito was an anthropomorphist, as several ancient sources portray him, he did not envision Jesus' glorious body as a

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<sup>1</sup> Melito, *PP* 82.

sensible object, but pertaining to the intelligible realm. According to him, the *Kyrios*, who is God, is not an entity that may be perceived through the ordinary eye but through noetic apprehension, through *noesis*. Jesus, in his glorious and pre-incarnate condition of Demiurge and, most likely, of cosmic Man, is a noetic entity.

## 2. PSEUDO-HIPPOLYTUS ON JESUS' NOETIC AND "RATIONAL" BODY

There are many instances where Pseudo-Hippolytus refers either to Jesus' noetic or rational (λογικός) nature or to the intelligible way of perceiving him. *IP* 26, for instance, makes reference to "the great body of Christ" and his "rational body of fiery nature (ἔμπυρον γὰρ λογικὸν σῶμα τοῦ Χριστοῦ)." It is worth noticing that the two phrases echo the famous Pauline expression about Christ's "body of glory" from Phil 3:21 which now is further interpreted. Thus, Jesus' body of glory, for Pseudo-Hippolytus, cannot be accessed with the bare eye, but may be seen through a special epistemic capacity. If we understand the term "rational" in the way we comprehend this word in our days, it will be a sheer misrepresentation. This entity which is Jesus' glorious body is "great" and "fiery," attributes which cannot be applied to abstractions but to real entities. Perhaps the Stoic understanding of the Logos as a spiritual and fiery reality would be much closer to the way Pseudo-Hippolytus envisioned Jesus' body as *logikos*. Following the same line of thought, *IP* 3.4, 17.14, and 45.23 portray Jesus Christ with the title the "Orient" or "Dawn" (ἀνατολή), an attribute which in one of its instances receives the qualification of "spiritual" (πνευματική; *IP* 45.23).

Pseudo-Hippolytus even conceives of the gigantic and luminous Christ as a noetic and invisible being. He starts the passage by unveiling a "secret" Hebrew tradition about creation while commenting on the idea that the Pascha is celebrated in the first month, which is the "beginning of months:"

Why is the month of the Pasch the first month of the year? A secret tradition among the Hebrews says that it was in this month (τὸν καιρὸν εἶναι ἐν ᾧ) that the Divine artist (τεχνίτης) God, the creator of the universe (δημιουργός), conceived this world (τὸ πᾶν). This was the first flower of creation (τῆς κτίσεως τὸ πρῶτον ἄνθος), the beauty of the world (τοῦ κόσμου τὸ κάλλος), when the creator saw (εἶδε) the statue of his artistic making (τὸ πανδαίδαλον ἄγαλμα) move (κινούμενον) in harmonious accord (ἑμμελῶς) with his intentions (κατὰ νοῦν ἑαυτοῦ).<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Pseudo-Hippolytus, *IP* 17.4.

The author visualizes the universe as a statue and the beginning of times as the moment when God saw the first beauty of his statue. It may be recalled that a statue (ἄγαλμα) in antiquity primarily had a human shape and Philo even conceived of the universe as the first image of the Image of God, of the archetypal Model which is the Logos.<sup>3</sup> Pseudo-Hippolytus does not criticize the “secret” Hebrew exegesis and regards it as an appropriate interpretation of the expression the “beginning of months.” He then offers his own interpretation according to which this month is the beginning of time because Christ the Pascha is the “first-begotten and firstborn of all noetic and invisible realities” (τῶν πάντων νοητῶν τε καὶ ἀοράτων πρωτόγονος ἔστι καὶ πρωτότοκος).

### 3. ORIGEN’S CONUNDRUM CONCERNING THE FORM OF GOD

#### A. Noetic World and Immateriality

We have already seen in the first and second parts of this study that Origen conceives of the Pascha as a liturgical process in which the celebrants have to reach the priestly condition of sacrificing and consuming the Lamb, here described metaphorically in the lineaments of a human being. However, the text does not allow us to think that Origen would consider of Jesus’ divine or invisible dimension as a real body. Indeed, the entire liturgical process of ingesting Christ’s body and blood includes an invisible dimension, which the author calls noetic. But we have to notice first that he calls noetic only the process, but not Jesus’ body:

It is necessary for us to sacrifice the true lamb (πρόβατον)—if we have been ordained priests (ιερωθῶμεν), or like priests have offered sacrifice—and it is necessary for us to cook and eat its flesh. ... To show that the passover is something spiritual (νοητόν) and not this sensible (αἰσθητόν) passover, he himself says: *Unless you eat my flesh and drink my blood, you have no life in you* (Jn 6:53). Are we then to eat His flesh and drink His blood in a physical manner? But if this is said spiritually, then the passover is spiritual, not physical.<sup>4</sup>

Second, we have to notice also that he talks in an allegorical-metaphorical way about the consumption of each part of Christ’s body: the head actually is

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Philo, *Opif.* 6.25.

<sup>4</sup> Origen, *Pasch.* 13.3–35. In passage 26, he explains how the flesh, i.e., the Scripture, does not have to be eaten “green” (an expression which denotes literal interpretation), but “cooked” on the fire of the Holy Spirit (which is the spiritual interpretation of the Bible).



the divinity of Christ; eating his ears is hearing his words; the eyes represent clear seeing; the hands refer to charitable workers; the breast is the devoted or loyal believer; the entrails are the depths of God; the thighs denote chastity; and the feet reflect the running to Christ.<sup>5</sup>

As a partial conclusion, the liturgical process of eating the Pascha (or Eucharist) encompasses a first ritual dimension; second, an ascetical dimension; and third, an invisible one, called noetic and mysterious. It is here that the initiates, as priests, consume the metaphorical body of Christ and advance into their similarity with God.

It is most plausible that an old quasi-anthropomorphic tradition of the noetic Jesus became a metaphor under Origen's pen. This conception about the Logos, most likely immaterial, coincides with his vision of a completely immaterial Trinity. Origen is the champion of the ineffability and incomprehensibility of God's essence and rejects any anthropomorphic attribute for the description of the divine. Moreover, he rejects as well the idea that God's nature might be connected with visibility and matter.<sup>6</sup> Origen understands exclusively the substance of the Trinity in a radically immaterial modality:

But if it is impossible by any means to maintain this proposition, namely, that any being (*natura*), with the exception of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, can live apart from a body (*corpus*), then logical reasoning compels us to believe that, while the original creation was of rational beings (*rationabiles naturas*), it is only in idea and thought that a material substance (*materialem*

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<sup>5</sup> *Pasch.* 30–31.

<sup>6</sup> E.g., *Princ.* 1.1.5: "Having then refuted, to the best of our ability, every interpretation which suggests that we should attribute to God any material characteristics, we assert that in truth he is incomprehensible and immeasurable (*Omni igitur sensu, qui corporeum aliquid de deo intellegi suggerit, prout potuimus, confutato, dicimus secundum veritatem quidem deum incomprehensibilem esse atque inaestimabilem.*). For whatever may be the knowledge which we have been able to obtain about God, whether by perception or by reflection, we must of necessity believe that he is far and away better than our thoughts about him (*Si quid enim illud est, quod sentire vel intellegere de deo potuerimus, multis longe modis eum meliorem esse ab eo quod sensimus necesse est credi.*)" For the Latin text, see Henri Crouzel and Manlio Simonetti, eds., *Origène: Traité des principes*, 5 vols., SC 252, 253, 268, 269, 312 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1978–1984). For the English translation, see George W. Butterworth, in *Origen: On First Principles* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966) 9. Cf. *Comm. Jo.* 13.123–152 et al. Cf. Stroumsa, "The Incorporeality;" af Hällström, *Fides Simpliciorum*, 64–69; Jon F. Dechow, "Origen and Corporeality: The Case of Methodius' *On the Resurrection*," in *Origeniana Quinta*, 509–518; Joseph T. Lienhard, "Origen and the Crisis of the Old Testament in the Early Church," *ProEccl.* 9:3 (2000): 355–366; Torjesen, "Enscripturation of Philosophy." See also Origen's difficulties with the term "incorporeal (ἀσώματος)" which does not appear in Scripture or the apostolic teaching in *Princ.*, Pref. 8. For the radical incorporeality of God's nature see for instance *Princ.* 1.1.6: "God therefore must not be thought to be in any kind of body, nor to exist in a body."

*substantiam*) is separable from them, and that though this substance seems to have been produced for them or after them, yet never have they lived or do they live without it; for we shall be right in believing that life without a body (*incorporea uita*) is found in the Trinity alone.<sup>7</sup>

### B. *Εἶδος*: *The Theory on the Resurrected Human Body*

Nevertheless, in some pages where Origen speculates on the nature of the resurrected human being, he proposes his famous theory of the εἶδος of the resurrected body and sometimes equates it with μορφή θεοῦ, with Jesus' pre-incarnate form. As we will see, Origen is not allegorizing or using a metaphorical language in his passages about Jesus' divine Form, and uses this concept in a very traditional manner. Every human body in heaven, according to Origen, will reach a glorious status at the eschaton, since perfection comes at the end, after the completion of all the works of economy.<sup>8</sup> At that time, human beings will become Gods, a doctrine which Origen explains in the following terms:

And now we must certainly ask whether in the consummation of all things, when 'God shall be all in all', the whole of bodily nature (*corporis natura*) will consist of one species (*un specie*) and whether the only quality of body (*qualitas corporis*) will be that which will shine with that unspeakable glory (*inenarrabili gloria fulgebit*) which we must believe will belong to the spiritual body (*spiritalis corporis*).<sup>9</sup>

The ontological condition of the resurrected human bodies will be spiritual and glorious:

So far then as our understanding can grasp it, we believe that the quality of a spiritual body (*qualitatem spiritualis corporis*) is something such as will make a fitting habitation not only for all saints and perfected souls but also for that 'whole creation' which is to be 'delivered from the bondage of corruption'. Of this body the same apostle has also said that 'we have a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens', that is, in the dwelling-places of the blest. From this statement we may then form a conjecture of what great purity, what extreme fineness, what great glory (*gloriae*) is the quality of that

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<sup>7</sup> *Princ.* 2.2.2. See also *Princ.* 1.6.4: "we believe that to exist without material substance (*materiali substantia*) apart from any association with a bodily element (*corporeae adiectionis*) is a thing that belongs only to the nature of God (*dei nature*), that is, of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit." Cf. *Princ.* 4.3.15: "But the substance of the Trinity (*substantia trinitatis*) ... must not be believed either to be a body or to exist in a body, but to be wholly incorporeal (*ex toto incorporea*)."<sup>8</sup> Cf. *Princ.* 4.4.1; 4.4.5: *natura trinitatis*.

<sup>8</sup> *Princ.* 3.6.1.

<sup>9</sup> *Princ.* 3.6.8.

body (*qualitas corporis*), by comparing it with those bodies which, although heavenly and most splendid (*splendidissima*), are yet made with hands and visible. For of that body it is said that it is a house not made with hands but 'eternal in the heavens'. ... From this comparison we may gain an idea how great is the beauty, how great the splendour (*splendor*) and how great the brightness (*fulgor*) of a spiritual body.<sup>10</sup>

Origen expresses the same idea through philosophical terminology in order to make it more palatable to his Hellenistic audience:

The highest good (*summmum bonum*), towards which all rational nature is progressing, and which is also called the end of all things, is defined by very many even among philosophers in the following way, namely, that the highest good is to become as far as possible like God (*similem fieri deo*).<sup>11</sup>

However, it is not only the human body that becomes a God but first and foremost Christ's human body and soul, a process which actually represents the model of deification. In addition to this, as Origen depicts the human resurrected body through the Greek philosophical term "ethereal," Christ's own glorious body will also be ethereal:

We affirm that his mortal body and the human soul in him received the greatest elevation not only by communion (*κοινωνία*) but by union and intermingling (*ἐνώσει καὶ ἀνακράσει*), so that sharing in His divinity (*τῆς ἐκείνου θεϊότητος κεκοινωνηκότα*) he was transformed into God (*εἰς θεὸν μεταβεβληκέναι*).

<sup>10</sup> *Princ.* 3.6.4. Cf. *Princ.* 2.2.2; 2.10.3; 3.6.6. *Prin.* 3.6.6 also declares that this spiritual and glorious condition of the human body is eternal. It is worth mentioning that the glorious form might regard the prelapsarian human condition (see *Prin.* 1.6.2; 3.6.8), but it should be noted that Gen 1:26, 2:7, and 3:21 do not refer to the glorious form as Anders L. Jacobsen indicated (see "Genesis 1–3 as Source for the Anthropology of Origen," *VChr* 62 [2008]: 213–232) against previous interpretations: Lawrence R. Hennessey, "A Philosophical Issue in Origen's Eschatology: The Three Senses of Incorporality," in *Origeniana Quinta*, ed. Robert J. Daley (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1992), 373–380; and Hermann S. Schlibli, "Origen, Didymus, and the Vehicle of the Soul," in *Origeniana Quinta*, 381–382.

<sup>11</sup> *Princ.* 3.6.1. Cf. Plato, *Theaet.* 176B. While Origen mentions in *Princ.* 3.6.5 a progression of the human being towards the status of a glorious body, the idea of becoming completely immaterial as God—as Bostock assumes—is not textually supported and makes less sense in Origen's system than the condition of an eternal glorious status, as Gilles Dorival noticed in his "Origène et la résurrection de la chair," *Origeniana quarta* (Innsbruck: Tyrolia Verlag, 1987), 291–321, esp. 312–315. For the idea of spiritual progress, see also *Princ.* 1.3.8, where the advance is explained in terms of purification, perfection, and receiving the blessedness of the Trinity, but not as identity with the Trinity. To the contrary, Origen avers that one may decay from the condition of blessedness because of negligence or satiation. Cf. Marguerite Harl, "Recherches sur l'origénisme d'Origène: La 'satiété' (κόρος) de la contemplation comme motif de la chute des âmes," in *Papers Presented to the Fourth International Conference on Patristic Studies Held in Oxford, 1963* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1966), 373–405.

... by the providence of God's will the mortal quality of Jesus' body should have been changed into an ethereal and divine quality (μεταλαμβάνειν εἰς αἰθέριον καὶ θεῖαν ποιότητα).<sup>12</sup>

As Abraham P. Boss observes in his monograph on the instrumentality of the body, ancient Greek philosophy, at least starting with Plato and Aristotle, conceived of the body as a vehicle of the soul.<sup>13</sup> And yet, Boss points out that Galen of Pergamum believed in the existence of a “luciform and ethereal body:”

As if we must speak of the substance (οὐσία) of the soul, we must say one of two things: we must say either that it is this, as it were, luciform and ethereal body (ἀύγοειδές τε καὶ αἰθερώδες σῶμα), a view to which the Stoics and Aristotle are carried in spite of themselves, as the logical consequence (of their teachings), or that it is (itself) an incorporeal substance (ἀσώματον οὐσίαν) and this body is the first vehicle (ὄχημα τὸ πρῶτον), by means of which it establishes partnership with other bodies.<sup>14</sup>

This note is significant, since the attributes “luciform” and “ethereal” represent two central designations of the Origenian glorious soul. Besides these two terms, Origen added two biblical Pauline attributes: spiritual (*pneumatikos*) and glorious. However, his method consists in a synthesis of Biblical views with concepts borrowed from the science and philosophy of his time.<sup>15</sup> But he is also interested in whether human resurrected body and its qualities will survive death and resurrection. At this point, he advances the

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<sup>12</sup> *Cels.* 3.41. Cf. *Princ.* 2.3.7: “... then also the bodily substance (*substantia corporalis*) itself, being united to the best and purest spirits, will be changed (*permutata*), in proportion to the quality or merits of those who wear it, into an ethereal condition (*in aetherium statum*), according to the apostle's saying, ‘and we shall be changed’, and will shine with light (*refulgebit*).”

<sup>13</sup> Abraham P. Boss, *The Soul and Its Instrumental Body: A Reinterpretation of Aristotle's Philosophy of Living Nature* (Leiden: Brill, 2003).

<sup>14</sup> Gallen, *PHP* 7.7.25–26. For the Greek edition, see Iwan von Müller, ed., *De placitis Hippocratis et Platonis* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1874), 474. For the English translation, see Phillip de Lacy, *Galen: On the Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato*, 3 vols. (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1978–1984), 2:475. Lacy dates this part of the work between AD 169 and 176 (*ibid.*, 1:46). Cf. Plutarch, *Facie* 15.928C (LCL 406:94): τοῦ αἰθέρος τὸ μὲν ἀύγοειδές and Origen, *Cels.* 2.60; 4.56, and *Comm. Matt.* 17.30.

<sup>15</sup> The term ἀύγοειδές, for instance, represents a topos of Late Antiquity, since it occurs as well in various other authors as an attribute of the soul, e.g. in Philiponus, *In De anima* 18.26; Plutarch, *De sera numinis vindicta* 26, 565C; Proclus, *In Timaeus* 33BC; Iamblicos, *De Myst* 5.10.3; Hermias, *In Phaedros* 69, 18C; Symplicius, *In Physika* 615, 31–35 e.a. In a similar way, Philo characterizes through this concept the invisible and noetic world in *Opif.* 30: “for the intelligible (τὸ νοητὸν) as far surpasses the visible (τοῦ ὄρατοῦ) in the brilliancy of its radiance (λαμπρότερόν τε καὶ ἀύγοειδέστερον), as sunlight assuredly surpasses darkness.”

theory of εἶδος. The metaphysical assumption on which lays the foundation of this theory is a doctrine about the nature of matter as receptacle of changing qualities:

Now by matter (*materia* = ὕλη) we mean that which underlies (*quae subiecta est* = ὑποκείμενον) bodies, namely, that from which they take their existence when qualities have been applied to or mingled with them. We speak of four qualities, heat, cold, dryness, wetness. These qualities, when mingled with the ὕλη or matter (which matter is clearly seen to have an existence in its own right [*propria ratione* = τῷ ἰδίῳ λόγῳ] apart from these qualities we have mentioned), produce the different kinds of bodies. But although, as we have said, this matter has an existence by its own right without qualities, yet it is never found actually existing apart from them.<sup>16</sup>

Origen further observes that only God is uncreated and fashioned matter through his power and wisdom. In a different writing, while debating with Celsus, he defends a similar theory about matter as shapeless receptacle of qualities:

If anyone should take offence because we say this even of his body, let him consider what is asserted by the Greeks about matter (ὕλης), that properly speaking it is without qualities (ποιότητας), but is clothed with qualities such as the Creator wishes to give it, and that often it puts aside its former qualities and receives better and different ones. If this is right, why is it remarkable that by the providence of God's will the mortal quality (τὴν ποιότητα τοῦ θνητοῦ) of Jesus' body should have been changed into an ethereal and divine quality (μεταλαμβάνειν εἰς αἰθέριον καὶ θείαν ποιότητα)?<sup>17</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Origen, *Princ.* 2.1.4. Cf. *Comm. Jo.* 13.21.127: “[E]very material body (σῶμα ὑλικόν) has a nature (φύσιν) that is without quality (ἄποιον) in its characteristic disposition, and is mutable and subject to variation and change in general, and contains whatever qualities (ποιότητας) the Creator may wish to bestow on it.” For the English translation, see Ronald Heine in *Origen: Commentary on the Gospel of John. Books 13–32* (Washington, DC: CUA Press, 1993).

<sup>17</sup> *Cels.* 3.41. Cf. *Cels.* 4.57: “For we also know that there are ‘both heavenly bodies and earthly bodies’ and that there is one glory of heavenly bodies and another of earthly bodies, and that not even that of heavenly bodies is the same; for there is one glory of the sun and another glory of the stars, and even among themselves ‘one star differs from another in glory’. Therefore also, as we believe in the resurrection of the dead, we affirm that changes occur in the qualities of bodies (ποιότητων τῶν ἐν σώμασιν), since some of them which have been ‘sown in corruption are raised in incorruption, and some sown in dishonour are raised in glory’, and some sown in weakness are raised in power, and bodies sown natural are raised spiritual (πνευματικά). All of us who have accepted the existence of providence maintain that the underlying matter (τὴν ὑποκειμένην ὕλην) is capable of receiving the qualities (δεκτικὴν εἶναι ποιότητων) which the Creator wills to give it. And by God's will a quality of one kind is imposed upon this particular matter, but afterwards it will have a quality of another kind, one, let us say, which is better and superior.”

As Crouzel observes, the general framework of this theory is therefore simple: a unique reality receives various qualities (ποιότητες) according to the will of God who is able to shape and change them.<sup>18</sup> The key point of discussion regards the change of the human being from the physical body to the body of resurrection, a discussion in which the Pauline distinction between the physical and spiritual bodies is taken as an axiom.<sup>19</sup> The main goal of the theory, however, is to identify that unique reality which remains constant during the passage from one ontological condition to the other. Crouzel shows that Origen conceives of that constant reality, at different times, as οὐσία, σῶμα, φύσις, ὕλη, or λόγος σπερματικός. Crouzel's further investigations, however, disclose a certain difficulty in this solution, as such passages as *De oratione* 26.6 and *Contra Celsum* 15.35–38 mention the change of οὐσία and φύσις and even refer to the change from an earthly to a heavenly οὐσία.<sup>20</sup> Crouzel resolves this difficulty by suggesting that Origen's principle of identity actually consists in a corporeal form (εἶδος), a constant element in the course of any transformation which a certain human being may undertake.<sup>21</sup> This idea is reflected in a fragment preserved in Epiphanius of Salamis's *Panarion* via Methodius of Olympus:

And here it must be understood that no body ever has the same material substratum (τὸ ὑλικὸν ὑποκείμενον οὐδέποτε ἔχει ταυτὸν). ... Thus the body has not inaptly been called a river. For strictly speaking, the first substratum (τὸ πρῶτον ὑποκείμενον) in our bodies is scarcely the same for two days, even though, despite the fluidity of the nature of a body. ... This is because the form which identifies the body is the same (τὸ εἶδος τὸ χαρακτηρίζον τὸ σῶμα ταυτὸν εἶναι), just as the features (τοὺς τύπους) which characterize Peter's or Paul's bodies remain the same—characteristics (ποιότητα) (like) childhood scars, and such peculiarities (ιδιώματα) (as) moles, and any others besides. This form (τὸ εἶδος), the bodily (τὸ σωματικόν), which constitutes (καθ' ὃ εἰδοποιεῖται) Peter and Paul, encloses the soul once more at the resurrection, changed for the better—but surely not this extension which underlay it at the first. For as the form (τὸ εἶδος) is (the same) from infancy until old age even though the features (οἱ χαρακτῆρες) appear to undergo considerable change (παραλλαγὴν), so we must suppose that, though its change (μεταβολή) for

<sup>18</sup> Crouzel, "Doctrine," 244.

<sup>19</sup> 1 Cor. 15:44.

<sup>20</sup> Crouzel, "Doctrine," 244–250.

<sup>21</sup> In his monograph on Origen, Crouzel counts three theories through which Origen expressed his doctrine about the identity between the resurrected and the earthly body: (1) through material substance; (2) through the seminal reason (*ratio seminalis, logos spermatikos*); cf. *Princ.* 2.10.3; (3) through the corporeal form (*eidōs somatikos*). Cf. Henri Crouzel, *Origène* (Paris: Éditions Lethielleux, 1984), 326–330.

the better will be very great, our present form will be the same in the world to come (τὸ ἐπὶ τοῦ παρόντος εἶδος ταύτων εἶναι τῷ μέλλοντι). ... But despite its change to greater glory (ἐπὶ τὸ ἐνδοξότερον γένηται αὐτοῦ ἢ τροπή) the form (τοῦ εἶδους) of the previous body does not vanish, just as, at the transfiguration, the forms (τὸ Ἰησοῦ εἶδος) of Jesus, Moses and Elijah were not different from what they had been (οὐχ ἕτερον ἐν τῇ μεταμορφώσει παρ' ὃ ἦν).<sup>22</sup>

Crouzel makes also the observation that Origen did not use the term εἶδος in the Platonic sense of a paradigmatic Idea separated from the sensible universe, but in the way the Middle Stoics, especially Poseidonius, employed it, with a meaning similar to the Stoic concept of λόγος σπερματικός, therefore as a principle active in the universe.<sup>23</sup> Additionally, although εἶδος and λόγος denote a genre in Greek philosophy, they may refer as well to the particular principle of an individual being. In his *Commentary on John*, while discussing on the various definitions of ἀρχή, Origen offers the following definition in connection with εἶδος: “Principle is that according to which a thing is the way it is (τὸ καθ’ οἶον) according to its form (κατὰ τὸ εἶδος).”<sup>24</sup> Crouzel also comments that the Origenian form (εἶδος) includes a similar function with the Aristotelian εἶδος, namely, that of “informing” the matter of the body which here plays the role of a receptacle without qualities.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Epiphanius, *Pan.* 64.14.2–9. For the Greek text, see Karl Holl, ed., *Epiphanius II: Panarion*, GCS 31 (Leipzig, J.C. Hinrichs, 1922). For the English translation, see Frank Williams, *The Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis: Book II and III (Sects 47–80)* (Leiden: Brill, 1993), 142–143. The fragment is part of Origen’s *Commentary on Psalms* (*Fr. Ps.* 1:5; PG 12.1091–1098) which Methodius of Olympus reproduced in his *On Resurrection* 1.20–24. Epiphanius further included it in his *Pan.* 64.10; 12–16 (GCS 31:419–427). Cf. *Pan.* 64.15.1–4: “Therefore do not be offended if someone should say that the first substratum (τὸ πρῶτον ὑποκειμένον) will not be the same then. For to those who can understand the matter, reason shows that, even now, the first substratum is not the same two days running. ... The form ([εἶδος]) will likely be preserved in the holy (body) (ἴσως μὲν γὰρ ἔσται περὶ τὸν ἅγιον (σῶμα) διακρατούμενον) by Him who once gave form to the flesh (τοῦ εἰδοποιούντος ποτε τὴν σάρκα). It will be flesh no longer (σὰρξ δὲ οὐκέτι) but whatever was once characteristic of the flesh will be characteristic of the spiritual body (ὅπερ ποτὲ ἐχαρακτηρίζετο ἐν τῇ σαρκί, τοῦτο χαρακτηρισθῆσεται ἐν τῷ πνευματικῷ σώματι).” See also a similar position in *Fr. Lc.* 140 (GCS 49[35]:283–284): “Just as the bodies [actually the “form” = τὸ εἶδος] of these men did not become other (οὐχ ἕτερον) at the Transfiguration, so at the resurrection the bodies of the saints [again the “form of, or around, the saints” = τὸ περὶ τοῦς ἁγίους εἶδος] will be far more glorious (πολλῶ ἐνδοξότερον) than the ones they had in this life, but will not be different from them (οὐχ ἕτερον).” For the original text, see H. Crouzel, F. Fournier, and P. Périchon, eds., *Origène: Homélie sur Luc; Texte latin et fragments grecs*, SC 87 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1962). For the English translation, see *Origen: Homilies on Luke*, trans. Joseph T. Lienhard, FC 94 (Washington, DC: CUA Press, 1996), 181.

<sup>23</sup> Crouzel, “Doctrine,” 254–256.

<sup>24</sup> *Comm. Jo.* 1.17.104.

<sup>25</sup> Crouzel, “Doctrine,” 256. As Crouzel affirms in his monograph on Origen, the *eidōs* as

For if we have understood the illustration properly, we must hold that when the generative principle (ὁ σπερματικός λόγος) in the grain of wheat has laid hold of the matter which surrounds it, has permeated it entirely (and) has taken control of its form (εἶδους), it imparts its own powers (δυνάμειν) to what was formerly earth, water, air and fire, and by prevailing over their characteristics (ποιότητας) transforms (μεταβάλλει) them into the thing whose creator it is (δημιουργός).<sup>26</sup>

In a synthetic phrase, Crouzel summarizes the doctrine in this way:

Cet *eidōs* « caractérise »: il imprime les caractères de la personnalité dans le corps, le terrestre comme le spirituel. C'est de cet *eidōs* que le *logos* spermatique qui est dans le grain de blé pénètre la matière qui l'entoure, lui imposant ses δυνάμεις, et change aussi les ποιότητες des quatre éléments dans les siennes propres. Il s'agit donc d'une force dynamique qui assimile les matériaux dont elle s'empare, utilisant leur qualités pour leur imposer ses propres caractères ou qualités.<sup>27</sup>

Crouzel finds therefore a deep connection between εἶδος, λόγος, and δύναμις, the last term reflecting the power which shapes the matter, a quasi-synonymous term of both εἶδος and λόγος.

*C. Μορφή Θεοῦ: The Theory on Jesus'  
Pre-Incarnate Form and Its Noetic Perception*

Origen uses the term εἶδος, however, to refer also to Jesus glorious and divine countenance, usually expressed through μορφή or μορφή Θεοῦ. The presence in Origenian writings of the idea that God might have a form represents a

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*form* of the human being is not identical with the soul, as in Aristotle's system. See Crouzel, *Origène*, 328.

<sup>26</sup> *Pan.* 64.16.7. It is worth bringing into light a second century commentary on Homer—a remarkable text falsely ascribed to Plutarch—because of its striking similarity with Origen's doctrine. See Ps-Plutarch, *De Homero* 2.128 (ACS 40:200): "Plato and Aristotle considered the soul to be incorporeal (ἀσώματον), and always to be connected (ἐνόμεσσαν) with body and to require this as vehicle (ὡσπερ ὀχήματος). Hence, when freed from the body, it often draws the pneumatic matter (τὸ πνευματικόν) with it, retaining like a wax tablet the shape (μορφήν) it had by virtue of the body." For the English translation, see John J. Keaney and Robert Lamberton, *Plutarch: Essay on the Life and Poetry of Homer* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996) 201. For the time of composition, see Keaney and Lamberton, 9; cf. Félix Buffière, *Les mythes d'Homère et la pensée grecque*, 2nd ed (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1973), 72–77; Jan F. Kindstrand, *Plutarchus: De Homero* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1990), x. However, the text unveils a much simpler perspective, using *morphe* instead of *eidōs* and representing it mostly as external aspect, therefore in the way Methodius interpreted and criticized Origen's text. For Methodius's criticism, see Henri Crouzel, "Les critiques adressées par Méthode et ses contemporains à la doctrine origénienne du corps ressuscité," *Greg.* 53 (1972): 679–716.

<sup>27</sup> Crouzel, "Doctrine," 255.



substantial argument for the existence and persistence of this Jewish and Christian tradition, strongly enforced by Pauline authority, in early Christian centuries. We have to remember that Phil 2:6 and 1Cor 1:15 functioned as main inspirational sources for Origen and other previous writers.

*Commentary on Matthew*, for instance, identifies divine image (εἰκόν), divine form (μορφή), and the figure of the Son of Man in his eschatological glory. One of the chapters describes the whole economy of salvation as the coming of the Son of Man to a status of dishonor, without form (εἶδος) and beauty, in order to restore human being to the conformity with the Divine Image (εἰκόν) and Form (μορφή). At the end of his earthly existence, the Son of Man has also his constitution restored to the Form of God:

But He also comes [i.e., at the end of time] in glory (ἐν δόξῃ), having prepared the disciples through that epiphany of His which has no form (εἶδος) nor beauty; and, having become as they that they might become as He, “conformed to the image of His glory” (συμμόρφους τῆς εἰκόνας τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ), since He formerly became conformed (σύμμορφος) to “the body of our humiliation,” when He “emptied Himself and took upon Him the form of a servant” (μορφὴν δούλου), He is restored to the image of God (ἀποκαθίσταται τε ἐπὶ τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ μορφὴν) and also makes them conformed unto it (ποιεῖ αὐτοὺς συμμόρφους αὐτῇ).<sup>28</sup>

The concept of ‘form’ (μορφή) plays a central role in Origen’s Christology, particularly being employed in the recurrent phrase the “form of God.” This expression, based on Phil 2:6–7 (“was in the form of God and took the form of a slave”) and representing a divine title, designates the pre-incarnate constitution of the Logos both in Paul and Origen.<sup>29</sup> Rufinus translates μορφή through *forma*, as for instance *De principiis* 1.2.8 (*erat in forma Dei*) demonstrates. In general, the text of *De principiis* does not represent God as deficient of *forma*, therefore of μορφή. In all instances where Crombie’s ANF translation, for example, asserts that God does not have form, color, and

<sup>28</sup> *Comm. Matt.* 12.29. For the Greek text, see R. Girod, ed., *Origène: Commentaire sur l'Évangile selon Matthieu*, SC 162 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1970). For the English translation, see Crombie, *ANF* 9:465. See also *Comm. Rom.* 7.7.4: “Moreover, I would like to investigate what he has said, “conformed to the image of his own Son (*conformes imaginis Filii sui*).” Into which form (*formae*) may they be said to be conformed? For we read that the Son of God was at one time in the form of God (*in forma Dei*), and at another time in the form of a slave (*in forma servi*). ... If these [virtues] are clearly formed in them [i.e., Christians] (*in eis formentur*) having become conformed into his image (*conformes imaginis*) they will be seen in that form (*illam formam*) in which [Christ] is in the form of God (*in forma Dei*).” For the English translation, see Thomas Scheck, *Origen: Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans Books 6–10* (Washington, DC: CUA Press, 2002), 2:84–85. Cf. *Comm. Rom.* 7.11.2.

<sup>29</sup> E.g., *Comm. Matt.* 14.17.

magnitude, the original Latin words are *habitus*, *color*, and *magnitudo*.<sup>30</sup> I submit that *forma* and *habitus* actually belong to two distinct realms. While *habitus* or *schema* (*Princ.* 2.10.2, which obviously renders the Greek σχῆμα, “form,” “shape,” “figure”) denote the visible realm of matter and corporeality, *forma Dei*, as a divine title, belongs to the heavenly sphere.<sup>31</sup>

*Commentary on John* includes a remarkable passage where the glorious Form stands for the ontological status in which the Logos subsists *in se*, his essential constitution or the way the Son exists within the Father:

... when the Son is in the Father (ἐν τῷ πατρὶ ἐστίν), being in the form of God (ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ ὑπάρχων) before he empties himself, God is his place (τόπος), as it were. And if indeed one considers him who, before he emptied himself, is in the essential form of God (ἐν τῇ προηγούμενῃ ὑπάρχοντα θεοῦ μορφῇ), he will see the Son who has not yet proceeded (μηδέπω ἐξεληλυθότα ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ) from God himself, and the Lord who has not yet proceeded from his place (μηδέπω ἐκπορευόμενον ἐκ τοῦ τόπου ἑαυτοῦ).<sup>32</sup>

We will see in the following Origenian materials that it is this Divine Form of the Logos in himself that the author ponders as the visual reality contemplated by the apostles on the Mountain of Transfiguration. While speculating, for instance, on the episode of the transfiguration in his the *Commentary on Matthew* 12.36–37, Origen assumes that all those who reach perfection are able to contemplate realities belonging to the invisible realm, which are eternal (τὰ μὴ βλεπόμενα διὰ τὸ εἶναι αὐτὰ αἰώνια). The commentator continues his line of thought by presuming that the Logos reveals himself not in a unique modality but in a large variety of ways according to the receiver’s capacity of perception. To the spiritually advanced apostles, Jesus will manifest his pre-incarnate Form:

The Word has different forms (διαφόρους γὰρ ἔχει ὁ λόγος μορφάς) and he appears to each as is expedient for him to see (φαινόμενος ἐκάστῳ ὡς συμφέρει τῷ βλέποντι). He is never revealed to any man beyond his capacity to see (μηδενὶ ὑπὲρ ὃ χωρεῖ ὁ βλέπων). Perhaps you will ask, when Jesus was transfigured before those he led up the high mountain, did he appear to them in the form of God in which he previously was (ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ ἣ ὑπῆρχε πάλαι), so that

<sup>30</sup> See *Princ.* 1.2.2; 1.2.4; 2.4.3; 4.1.27.

<sup>31</sup> See, for instance, *Princ.* 2.4.3: “For in no other way can anything be seen (*uideri*) except by its shape (*habitus*) and size (*magnitudinem*) and colour (*colorem*), which are properties of bodies (*specialia corporum*).” Cf. *Princ.* 2.10.2.

<sup>32</sup> *Comm. Jo.* 20.153–155. Trans. Heine, *Origen*, 2:238. The interpreter here speculates on Micah 1:2–4 and John 8:42. Origen conceives of the Logos as glorious and in the Form of God before the incarnation. In his earthly existence, the Logos hides his glory in flesh and beneath his servant form; e.g., *Princ.* 1.2.5–7.

for those below he had the form of a slave but for those who had followed him to the high mountain after the six days he did not have that form, but the form of God?<sup>33</sup>

This rhetorical question will receive an obvious affirmative answer. The Logos shows his human visible form (the form of a slave) to the beginners, and allows only the advanced to contemplate his invisible and eternal Form (his Form of God):

If you wish to see how Jesus was transfigured before those he had led apart with him up the high mountain, then first see with me Jesus in the Gospels, for there he is more simply appreciated, and we might say 'known according to the flesh' by those who do not go up the high mountain by means of uplifting works and words (ἀναβαίνουσι διὰ τῶν ἐπαναβεβηκότων ἔργων καὶ λόγων), yet 'known no longer according to the flesh' by means of all the Gospels, for there he is known in his divinity (θεολογούμενον) and seen in the form of God (ἐν τῇ τοῦ θεοῦ μορφῇ ... θεωρούμενον) according to their knowledge. It is before such as these that Jesus is transfigured, not before any of those below.<sup>34</sup>

The text plainly identifies Jesus' Form of God revealed in the transfiguration with his pre-incarnate status. In addition, a few previous chapters (12.31–33) equate Jesus' form revealed in the transfiguration with his eschatological glorious condition and even with the kingdom itself.

There are several other passages also illustrating the idea that Jesus unveils his Divine and Glorious Form on the Mount of Transfiguration. Origen asserts in *Contra Celsum* 4.16, for instance, that Christ reveals in that episode his "other form," his "higher nature," and his "glorious and more divine" condition:

There are, as it were, different forms of the Word (διάφοροι οἰοεὶ τοῦ λόγου μορφαί). For the Word appears (φαίνεται) to each of those who are led to know him in a form corresponding to the state of the individual (ἀνάλογον τῇ ἕξει), whether he is a beginner, or has made a little progress, or is considerably advanced, or has nearly attained to virtue already, or has in fact attained it. ... [O]ur God was transformed when he went up a high mountain and showed his other form (ἄλλην ἔδειξε τὴν ἑαυτοῦ μορφήν). ... For the people down below had not eyes capable of seeing the transfiguration of the Word into something wonderful and more divine (τὴν τοῦ λόγου ἐπὶ τὸ ἔνδοξον καὶ θεϊότερον μεταμόρφωσιν). They were hardly able to receive him as he was, so that it was said of him by those not able to see his higher nature (τὸ κρείττον αὐτοῦ βλέπειν).<sup>35</sup>

<sup>33</sup> *Comm. Matt.* 12.36–37. Trans. John McGuckin, *The Transfiguration of Christ in Scripture and Tradition*, SBEC 9 (Lewiston/Queenston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1986), 155–157.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> *Cels.* 4.16. For the Greek text, see Marcel Borret, ed. *Origène: Contre Celse*, SC 132, 136,

A different place in *Contra Celsum* similarly equates the form which Christ assumes in the transfiguration with the Form in which he existed before the incarnation:

He 'was in the beginning with God'; but because of those who had cleaved to the flesh and become as flesh, he became flesh, that he might be received by those incapable of seeing him in his nature as the one who was the Logos (αὐτὸν βλέπειν καθὸ λόγος), who was with God, who was God. And being spoken of under physical forms (σωματικῶς), and being proclaimed to be flesh, he calls to himself those who are flesh that he may make them first to be formed like the Logos (μορφωθῆναι κατὰ λόγον) who became flesh, and after that lead them up to see him (ἀναβιβάσῃ ἐπὶ τὸ ἰδεῖν αὐτόν) as he was before he became flesh (ὅπερ ἦν πρὶν γέννηται σάρξ).<sup>36</sup>

The text discloses as well Origen's beliefs about the purpose of human existence: that is to contemplate the Logos in his pre-incarnate condition, in his Form of God, and eventually be transformed according to this Form. This change of forms towards a more congruency with the Logos may be seen as one of Origen's formulations of the ancient doctrine of deification.<sup>37</sup> The passage narrates the economy of salvation through "form" language: the Logos—who, before the incarnation, existed in the spiritual and glorious Form of God—took the physical form of the servant in order to allow the servant to be formed in the spiritual and luminous Form of the Logos.<sup>38</sup> In the larger design of the economy of salvation, the event of the transfiguration plays the significant pedagogical role of revealing both the pre-incarnate Form of the Logos and the paradigm and *telos* of human destiny, its eschatological, deified, and glorious condition.

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147, 150 (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1967–1969). For the English translation, see Henry Chadwick, *Origen: Contra Celsum* (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1953), 194.

<sup>36</sup> *Cels.* 6.68. See also the following sentences from the same passage: "But even while he tabernacled and lived among us he did not remain with his primary form (οὐκ ἔμεινεν ἐπὶ τῆς πρώτης μορφῆς). After leading us up to the spiritual 'high mountain', he showed us his glorious form (τὴν ἔνδοξον μορφὴν ἑαυτοῦ) and the radiance (τὴν λαμπρότητα) of his clothing." Trans. Chadwick, 383. Compare with the following expression from *Comm. Mt.* 12.37: "the form of God in which he previously was (ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ ἣ ὑπῆρχε πάλαι)." Trans. McGuckin, 156.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. *Princ.* 3.6.4 and 8 for the spiritual and divinized bodies of the holy ones at the eschaton.

<sup>38</sup> See also the quotation corresponding to footnote 28. Cf. Harl, *Origène*, 256: "Il viendra dans la gloire une fois qu'il aura préparé ses disciples par sa venue sans forme ni beauté, se faisant comme eux pour qu'ils deviennent comme lui, conformes à l'image de sa gloire, une fois que lui-même s'est fait conforme au corps de notre humilité en s'anéantissant et en prenant la forme d'esclave. Mais il reviendra à sa forme de Dieu et il rendra ses disciples conformes à cette forme."

In *Commentary on Matthew* 12.30, after mentioning that the Word appears with no Form and no beauty (therefore in his human form) to the people who did not reach perfection, Origen asserts that the glory of the Logos is accessible only to the perfect:

But to the perfect He comes “in the glory of His own Father” (τοῖς δὲ τελείοις ἔρχεται ἐν τῇ δόξῃ τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ) who might say, “and we beheld His glory, the glory as of only-begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.” For indeed to the perfect appears the glory of the Word (δόξα τοῦ λόγου), and the only-begotten of God His Father, and the fullness of grace and likewise of truth, which that man cannot perceive who requires “foolishness of the preaching,” in order to believe.<sup>39</sup>

A few other places where Origen investigates the episode of the transfiguration mention the vision of Jesus’ divinity. *Contra Celsum* identifies the divine glory with Christ’s divinity and supports the idea that the luminous apparition on the mountain was Jesus’ divine condition.<sup>40</sup> The text begins by discussing about the “divinity within him [i.e., Jesus] which was hidden from the multitude (τὴν ἔνδον καὶ ἀποκεκρυμμένην τοῖς πολλοῖς θειότητα),”<sup>41</sup> and continues by describing the exterior manifestation of this hidden luminous divinity in the transfiguration:

For not even with the apostles themselves and disciples was he always present or always apparent (ἀεὶ συνῆν ἢ αἰεὶ ἐφαίνετο), because they were unable to receive his divinity (αὐτοῦ χωρῆσαι τὴν θεωρίαν) without some periods of relief. After he had accomplished the work of his incarnation his divinity (θειότης) was more brilliant (λαμπροτέρα).<sup>42</sup>

From an epistemological perspective, Origen asserts in various instances that ordinary cognitive capacities cannot perceive the Form of God, but the

<sup>39</sup> *Comm. Matt.* 12.30. Trans. Crombie, *ANF* 9:466.

<sup>40</sup> Christ’s divinity and glory are obviously equated as well in *Com. Eph.* 3.16–17. These passages demonstrate that Origen does not understand the concept of divinity as an intangible essence isolated in heaven but as a divine manifestation in history, sometimes as a hidden divine power, sometimes as the divine *kabod* or *doxa* which the apostles contemplated on the mountain of the transfiguration. See also Harl, *Origène*, 25: “La gloire du Christ est sa divinité.”

<sup>41</sup> *Cels.* 2.64. Cf. *Cels.* 1.60; 66; 2.8; 34; 7.17; 8.42; *Hom. Lev.* 2.3 (SC 286:104). Similarly, *Cels.* 4.5 conceives of the divinity as a sort of grace able to dwell in a person: “The power and divinity of God come to dwell among men through the man whom God wills to choose and in whom He finds room.”

<sup>42</sup> *Cels.* 2.65. For the light of divinity, see also *Cels.* 1.60; *Princ.* 4.4.9; et al. There are some passages which can be interpreted as referring to Christ’s divine nature, e.g., *Cels.* 1.47; 56; 3.28. It should be noticed as well that *Cels.* 7.46 equates the eternal power (αἰδιος δύναμις) of God with his divinity. Cf. *Cels.* 4.5; 6.4; 7.17; *Princ.* 2.6.1.

visionary must actualize special faculties in order to fathom beyond the visible universe. The Alexandrian refers then to intuition or understanding (*nous*) and formulates the following epistemological principle: intelligible things are perceived through understanding. In this way, Moses, the prophets, and the apostles actually did not see God, but rather understood him:

This certainly involves you in serious difficulties, whereas we interpret it (*sensitur*) more correctly as referring not to sight (*pro uidendo*) but to understanding (*pro intellegendo*). For he who has understood (*intellexerit*) the Son has understood (*intellexerit*) the Father also. It is in this manner then that must suppose Moses to have seen (*uidisse*) God, not by looking (*intuens*) at him with eyes of flesh (*oculis carnalibus*), but by understanding (*intellegens*) him with the vision of the heart (*uisu cordis*) and the perception of the mind (*sensu mentis*), and even this in part only. For it is well-known that he, that is, the one who gave the oracles to Moses, says, 'Thou shalt not see (*uidebis*) my face, but my back' (Exod 33:23). Certainly these statements must be understood by the aid of that symbolism (*sacramento*) which is appropriate to the understanding of divine sayings, and those old wives' fables, which ignorant people invent on the subject of the front and back parts of God, must be utterly rejected and despised.<sup>43</sup>

As *nous* is also called "vision of the heart," "perception of the mind," and many other names, the famous doctrine of the noetic senses enters the scene at this point of the discussion.<sup>44</sup> Besides this, the text unveils the fact that

<sup>43</sup> *Princ.* 2.4.3.

<sup>44</sup> See also *Princ.* 1.1.9: "But if the question is put to us why it was said, 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God' (Matt. 5:8), I answer that in my opinion our argument will be much more firmly established by this passage. For what else is 'to see God in the heart' but to understand and know him with the mind (*mente eum intellegere atque cognoscere*), just as we have explained above? For the names of the organs of sense are often applied to the soul, so that we speak of seeing with the eyes of the heart, that is, of drawing some intellectual (*intellectuale*) conclusions by means of the faculty of intelligence (*uirtute intelligentiae*). So too we speak of hearing with the ears when we discern the deeper meaning of some statement. So too we speak of the soul as being able to use teeth, when it eats and consumes the bread of life which comes down from heaven. In a similar way we speak of it as using all the other bodily organs, which are transferred from their corporeal significance and applied to the faculties of the soul; as Solomon says, 'You will find a divine sense' (*Sensum diuinum inuenies*) (Prov 2:5). For he knew that there were in us two kinds of senses (*sensuum*), the one being mortal, corruptible and human (*mortale, corruptibile, humanum*), and the other immortal and intellectual (*immortale et intellectuale*), which here he calls 'divine' (*diuinum*). By this divine sense (*sensu diuino*), therefore, not of the eyes but of a pure heart, that is, the mind (*mens*), God may be seen (*uideri*) by those who are worthy (*digni*)." Trans. Butterworth, 14. See also *Dial.* 16–24 (SC 67:88–102), one of the most illustrative passages on the doctrine of the noetic senses. Butterworth observes that Origen's reading of Prov 2:5, preserved in the

Origen elaborated this doctrine in the intellectual context of the anthropomorphic debate. In one of their penetrating insights, both Henri Crouzel and John Dillon made the connection between biblical anthropomorphisms—therefore the vision of the Form of God—and Origen's doctrine of noetic senses.<sup>45</sup> Commenting on Origen's *Contra Celsum* 1.48 and 7.34, Dillon remarks:

It is plain that he has here developed a systematic theory of analogical, 'spiritual' senses for the intellect, or *hegemonikon*, apparently to solve a series of problems of exegesis posed by anthropomorphic expressions about the godhead and about spiritual life which abound in both the Old and New Testaments.<sup>46</sup>

*Morphe*, in conclusion, seems to be almost a synonymous term for *eidōs*, a noetic, ethereal, and luminous Form which Jesus enjoys in both his pre-incarnate and eschatological or resurrected conditions. Moreover, it is the Form into which he will transform all those who will be saved in the kingdom of God. However, by identifying *morphe* with the pre-incarnate Form of Christ, Origen starts a sheer incongruence with those passages where he describes the Trinity (and, implicitly, the Logos) as immaterial, since *morphe* and *eidōs* are material entities, indeed of a refined, ethereal, and noetic nature. In conclusion, is the pre-incarnate Son perfectly immaterial? Or, does he possess a Form which the apostles saw and the resurrected ones will probably enjoy in heaven? This dilemma remains an open question to be further investigated in future studies.

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Greek version in *Cels.* 7.34 (SC 150:92), is not identical with that of the Septuagint. While the scriptural phrase is ἐπίγνωσιν θεοῦ εὐρήσεις, Origen reads αἰσθησιν θείαν εὐρήσεις. See Butterworth, *Origen*, 14.

<sup>45</sup> See also Henri Crouzel, *Origène et la «connaissance mystique»* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1961), 262 and John Dillon, "Aisthêsis Noêtê: A Doctrine of Spiritual Senses in Origen and in Plotinus," in *Hellenica et Judaica: Hommage à Valentin Nikiprowetsky*, ed. A. Caquot et al. (Leuven: Peeters, 1986), 443–455. Dillon also shows in his "Aisthêsis Noêtê" that there are some traces for a noetic correlate of sense-perception in the Platonist heritage before Origen. For other secondary sources on the idea of spiritual senses, see for instance Karl Rahner, "Le début d'une doctrine des cinq sens spirituels chez Origène," *RAM* 13 (1932): 113–145; Crouzel, *Origène et la connaissance*, 505–507; Margueritte Harl, "La 'bouche' et le 'cœur' de l'Apôtre: Deux images bibliques du 'sente divin' de l'homme ('Proverbes' 2, 5) chez Origène," in *Forma Futuri: Studi in onore del Cardinale Michele Pellegrino* (Turin: Bottega d'Erasmus, 1975), 17–42; or B. Julien Fraigneau, *Les sens spirituels et la vision de Dieu chez saint Syméon le Nouveau Théologien* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1985).

<sup>46</sup> Dillon, "Aisthêsis Noêtê," 445; cf. 449.

## 4. METHODIUS ON CHRIST'S NOETIC IMAGE

According to Methodius, human being was designed to become immortal and to share this condition with such celestial powers as the angels, thrones, powers, and cherubim.<sup>47</sup> As a matter of fact, all these angelic beings are endowed with noetic bodies (τὰ νοερὰ τῶν ἀγγέλων σώματα).<sup>48</sup> Compared to the human constitution, the angelic one consists of a purer substance, spiritual or pneumatic (ἀπὸ τῆς πνευματικῆς καθαρωτέρας οὐσίας).<sup>49</sup> However, human resurrected bodies are also considered pneumatic or spiritual (σῶμα πνευματικόν), in the sense that they will participate completely in the operation of the Spirit.<sup>50</sup> Moreover, Methodius qualifies human souls as intelligible bodies (σώματα νοερὰ),<sup>51</sup> possessing a certain form (μορφή).

There are several instances where Methodius explains how Jesus showed his body of glory on the Mount of Transfiguration, the same body of flesh transfigured for a few moments into a glorious, pneumatic state. Nevertheless, this body of glory itself is a somatic and visible entity (perceptible indeed with the help of noetic capacities), because it is exclusively God's nature (φύσις) which is asomatic and, thus, invisible (ἄσώματος ὧν διὸ καὶ ἀόρατος, θεὸν γὰρ οὐδεὶς ἑώρακεν).<sup>52</sup> For Methodius, therefore, corporeality implies visibility not only in the sensible realm but also in the glorious intelligible domain of souls, angels, and Jesus' body of glory.

There is, however, a Form of God—namely, his Image or the Image of the Logos—an image with a fuzzy ontological status in Methodius, since it belongs to God and equally is the Form according to which God shapes angels and humans. According to the above metaphysical principle, having a form implies possessing a certain corporeality. Angels share this external form, image (εἰκῶν), or godlike shape (θεοεἶκελον σχῆμα), with the resurrected human beings, a form which is also called the shape of resurrection (σχῆμα τὸ ἀνιστάμενον).<sup>53</sup> The Logos possesses therefore a noetic Image, a godlike shape belonging to the noetic realm. In the *Banquet* 8.8. Methodius mentions this form of the Logos imprinted in the human being in an internalized manner:

<sup>47</sup> E.g., *Res.* 1.49.1–2 and 2.24.2–3.

<sup>48</sup> *Res.* 3.15.1.

<sup>49</sup> *Res.* 1.24.3.

<sup>50</sup> *Res.* 3.16.9.

<sup>51</sup> *Res.* 3.18.4.

<sup>52</sup> *Res.* 3.18.4.

<sup>53</sup> *Res.* 3.15.1–2.



For I think that the Church is here said to give birth to a male; since the enlightened receive the features, and the image, and the manliness of Christ, the likeness of the form of the Word being stamped upon them (τῆς καθ' ὁμοίωσιν μορφῆς ἐν αὐτοῖς ἐκτυπούμενης τοῦ λόγου), and begotten in them by a true knowledge and faith, so that in each one Christ is spiritually (νοητῶς) born.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Several times, early paschal texts allude, or directly affirm, as in Pseudo-Hippolytus's case, that Jesus' divine condition implies a luminous corporeality perceivable only through the *nous* or *noesis*. Origen and Methodius also acknowledge a Divine Form of the Logos, while assuming that only God is perfectly incorporeal. Since any form has to imply a certain corporeality, the two authors struggle with harmonizing the two doctrines about the Form of the Logos and God's perfect incorporeality. While Melito and especially Pseudo-Hippolytus witness the transfer of the anthropomorphic figure of biblical theophanies to the noetic level (as a solution to literal anthropomorphism), Origen and Methodius witness the fact that this solution manifests certain weaknesses if one postulates simultaneously the philosophical principle of God's perfect incorporeality.

In Late Antiquity, however, it was not only Melito and Pseudo-Hippolytus who transferred the anthropomorphic figure of biblical theophanies to the noetic level of reality but many other classical authors. The following chapters will demonstrate that several Jewish, Christian, and other Hellenistic writers envisioned the same solution which, seen from this larger context, seems to be the preferred solution to anthropomorphism of the educated late antique authors.

## CHAPTER TWELVE

### THE NOETIC ANTHROPOS OF PRE-NICENE CHRISTIAN HELLENISM

The noetic Anthropos represents a significant conceptual leap from anthropomorphic terminologies. As seen above, various intellectual traditions, from the biblical *Shem* positions to Ezekiel's intricate semiotic language, struggle with the idea that God might have a body. As I have shown in a different study, Hellenistic Jewish and Christian authors invented a new paradigm of thought, inspired by Platonic philosophy, in order to solve this hermeneutical difficulty. I called that solution the "noetic turn."<sup>1</sup> These writers translated the biblical and apocalyptic ontology and epistemology to the intelligible level. From now on, God, his glory, Divine Form, his angels, and the resurrected ones will be envisioned as indwelling a noetic universe, different from the sensible one, invisible for the ordinary eye, and accessible only through *noesis*.<sup>2</sup> Arguably Philo, Josephus, and then some Christian authors such as Clement dimmed that the Form of God was actually inaccessible even to the human intellect. For Clement and other Christian authors, only the Father can see the Form of the Son.

One of the earliest Hellenistic challenges to anthropomorphism appears already in Aristobulus who avows that, while the Law ascribes hands, arms, face, feet, and walk to the divine power (ἐπι τῆς θείας δυνάμεως), the wise interpret will not fall into a mythic and anthropomorphic understanding (εἰς τὸ μυθῶδες καὶ ἀνθρώπινον κατὰστημα).<sup>3</sup> His position is certainly a strong rejection of the anthropomorphic position and the literal interpretation of the Bible. I would like to point out, however, that he associates the concept of *dynamis* and anthropomorphism. Thus, it may be presumed that certain anthropomorphists of his time believed that God's *dynamis* took a particular

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<sup>1</sup> See Giulea, "Noetic Turn."

<sup>2</sup> However, the anthropomorphic tendency persisted in early rabbinic and Christian settings as the well-known early *Shiur Komah*-type speculations or such Christian documents as the *Acts John* 89–93 or *Acts Pet.* 20 prove it. The last two materials describe some episodes in which John and Peter have a direct visual access to the luminous, gigantic, and spiritual body of Jesus.

<sup>3</sup> Aristobulus, in Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 8.10.1–2.

form, most likely anthropomorphic. This position might have been one of the most ancient formulations of the idea of noetic Anthropos. According to Aristobulus's opposite standpoint, the divine power cannot have any form, because it is present everywhere in the universe. This interpretation is congruent with his anti-anthropomorphic stance. God does not have a form, since thousands of Jews saw him descending to reveal the Law, and all of them contemplated him as fire and light not only on the mount but in the whole universe.<sup>4</sup>

### 1. PROLEGOMENA:

#### DIVINE FORM AND NOETIC ANTHROPOS IN HELLENISTIC SETTING

In the Alexandrian intellectual environment of the second century BCE, Aristobulus takes over and even makes some editorial adjustments to a pseudo-Orphic hymn which states that God is unseen by mortal eyes, but that a certain Chaldean wise man, skilled in astronomy, discerned God with his mind (νοῦς). The Chaldean—possibly Musaeus, Moses, or Abraham—had the vision of God or of Zeus enthroned on a heavenly golden throne, with his feet touching the earth and his hands the limits of the ocean. The poem most likely was of Greek origins, and Aristobulus preferred to identify Yahweh and Zeus:

Walk wisely in the way, and look to none,  
 Save to the immortal Framer of the world:  
 For thus of Him an ancient story speaks:  
 One (Εἷς), perfect in Himself (αὐτοτελής), all else by Him  
 Made perfect: ever present in His works,  
 By mortal eyes unseen (εἰσοράα), by mind (νοῦ δ' εἰσοράαται) alone  
 Discerned.  
 ... All other things  
 'Twere easy to behold, could'st thou but first  
 Behold Himself here present upon earth.  
 The footsteps and the mighty hand of God  
 Whene'er I see, I'll show them thee, my son:  
 But Him I cannot see (ὁρώω), so dense a cloud  
 In tenfold darkness wraps our feeble sight.  
 Him in His power no mortal could behold,  
 Save one, a scion of Chaldaean race:  
 For he was skilled to mark the sun's bright path,  
 And how in even circle round the earth

<sup>4</sup> *Praep. ev.* 8.10.12–18.

The starry sphere on its own axis turns,  
 And winds their chariot guide o'er sea and sky;  
 And showed where fire's bright flame its strength displayed.  
 But God Himself, high above heaven unmoved,  
 Sits on His golden throne, and plants His feet  
 On the broad earth; His right hand He extends  
 O'er Ocean's farthest bound; the eternal hills  
 Tremble in their deep heart, nor can endure  
 His mighty power (μένος). And still above the heavens  
 Alone He sits, and governs all on earth,  
 Himself first cause, and means, and end of all.<sup>5</sup>

Philo, Josephus, and the Hermetic Corpus have to be mentioned in our discussion, because they witness the late antique speculations about the Form of God. While Philo and Josephus accept its existence, they also deny the human access to this lofty reality. To the contrary, the Hermetic Corpus assumes that human noetic perception is able to grasp it. Starting with Philo, he avers in *De somniis* 1.232 that the archetypal Form of God (τὸ ἀρχέτυπον εἶδος) is invisible to the souls in bodies (therefore to human beings) but accessible to the incorporeal souls serving in God's proximity. It is worth mentioning that the word εἶδος represents a Jewish and Christian technical theophanic term denoting God's luminous countenance in heaven, while its origins may be found in Ezekiel's visionary account which describes God as "a figure like that of a man" (דמות כמראה אדם; ὁμοίωμα ὡς εἶδος ἀνθρώπου [1.26]).

A similar rejection to describe God's εἶδος recurs in *De specialibus legibus*, where Philo reports Moses' conversation with God and agrees that human beings cannot contemplate God's εἶδος but only his divine glory: "I bow before Thy admonitions, that I never could have received the vision of Thee clearly manifested (τὸ τῆς σῆς φαντασίας ἐναργές εἶδος), but I beseech Thee that I may at least see the glory that surrounds Thee (περὶ σὲ δόξαν θεάσασθαι)."<sup>6</sup> Of course, this radiance is not the visible and sensible light but the invisible and intelligible one (τὸ δὲ ἀόρατον καὶ νοητὸν φῶς) mentioned for instance in *De opificio* 30.

A similar vision about the inaccessible Form of God appears in Josephus who also assumes that the human mind cannot access this Form but only God's works in creation:

<sup>5</sup> Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 13.12.5. Trans. E.H. Gifford (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1903).

<sup>6</sup> Philo, *Leg.* 1.45.

By His works and bounties He is plainly seen, indeed more manifest than ought else; but His form (μορφήν) and magnitude (μέγεθος) surpass our powers of description (ἡμῖν ἄφατος). No materials, however costly, are fit to make an image (εἰκόνα) of Him; no art has skill to conceive and represent it.<sup>7</sup>

Another document of Hellenistic culture, a passage from the *Corpus Hermeticum*, conceives of God as endowed with incorporeal Form (ἀσώματος ἰδέα), invisible to the ordinary eye. The nature of God, in this case, recalls the nature of Plato's ideas, invisible to the ordinary eye and incorporeal. It is supposed, however, that only the *nous* may discern this enigmatic incorporeal Form:

For there can be no impasse in our understanding of god. Therefore, if he has any structure (ἰδέα) in him, it is one structure (μίαν ἰδέαν), incorporeal (ἀσώματος), that does not yield to appearances (ταῖς ὄψεσιν). ... Do not be surprised at the notion of an incorporeal structure (ἀσώματος ἰδέα), for it is like the structure of a word (ἡ τοῦ λόγου).<sup>8</sup>

## 2. JUSTIN MARTYR ON JESUS' FORM AND THE SHAPELESS CONDITION OF THE FATHER

At the very beginning of his dialogue with Trypho, Justin Martyr admits that the Deity "cannot be seen by the same eyes as other living beings are. He is to be perceived by the mind alone (μόνῳ νῶ καταληπτόν), as Plato affirms."<sup>9</sup> While defining God the Father as devoid of any form or measure (οὐ σχήμα, οὐ μέγεθος; *Dial.* 1.4 [PTS 47:77]), Justin opines that the Son has a Form, called the Form of God, and that human language is unable to offer an adequate description of it:

But neither do we use a multitude of sacrifices and garlands of flowers to honour those whom human beings formed and set up in temples and called gods, since we know that such things are dead and do not possess the form of God (θεοῦ μορφήν) ... This we think is not only irrational but is also an insult to God, whose name, though his glory and form are beyond words (ἄρρητον δόξαν καὶ μορφήν) is given to things that are corruptible and need to be looked after.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Josephus, *C. Ap.* 2.190–191.

<sup>8</sup> *Tract.* 11.16–17.

<sup>9</sup> Justin, *Dial.* 1.3.7. For the Greek text, see Philippe Bobichon, *Justin Martyr, Dialogue avec Tryphon: Édition critique, traduction et commentaire*, Paradosis 47 (Fribourg: Academic Press Fribourg, 2004), 76. For the English translation, see *St. Justin Martyr: Dialogue with Trypho*, trans. T.B. Falls, rev. Thomas P. Halton (Washington, DC: CUA Press, 2003), 9.

<sup>10</sup> Justin, 1 *Apol.* 9.1–3. For the Greek text, see Miroslav Marcovich, ed., *Iustini Martyris*

## 3. IRENAEUS ON CHRIST'S INVISIBLE FORM AND MEASURE

One of the most fascinating Irenaean texts, *Epideixis* 34, indicates the existence of an “invisible form” of the divine Logos: “He is Himself the Word of God Almighty, who in His invisible form (աներևոյԹ տեսլեանն) pervades us universally in the whole world.”<sup>11</sup> The term used for “form” (տեսլի) means “aspect,” “appearance,” “look,” “sight,” “image,” and “spectacle;” even “vision,” “phantom,” in a religious sense; or “theory,” “idea,” in a more philosophical understanding. The word denotes, therefore, a visually or mentally perceptible reality, and its meaning is sensibly different from “manner,” “way,” as Rousseau rendered it in his Greek retroversion while translating the entire phrase աներևոյԹ տեսլեանն as “according to the invisible” (κατὰ τὸ ἄόρατον), instead of “invisible form.”<sup>12</sup>

Starting from Antonio Orbe’s insights concerning the visibility of the Son, Juan Ochagavía has already argued that Irenaeus generally conceives of the notion of “image” as automatically implying a figure, a spatial shape:

In like manner, neither can those things which are corruptible and earthly, and of a compound nature, and transitory, be the images of those which, according to these men, are spiritual; unless these very things themselves be allowed to be compound, limited in space, and of a definite shape, and thus no longer spiritual, and diffused, and spreading into vast extent, and incomprehensible. For they must of necessity be possessed of a definite figure, and confined within certain limits, that they may be true images (*Necesse est enim ea in figurazione esse et circumscriptione, ut sint imagines uerae*).<sup>13</sup>

Ochagavía draws the following logical conclusion consonant with the aforementioned Irenaean text: “From this citation we can conclude that, since an

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*Apologiae pro Christianis*, PTS 38 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1994), 43–44. For the English translation, see *Justin, Philosopher and Martyr: Apologies*, trans. and ed. D. Minns and P. Parvis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 97.

<sup>11</sup> Irenaeus, *Epid.* 34 (SC 406,131–132;272–277; PO 12/5,33+PO 39/1/178,133). For the English translation, see *St. Irenaeus: Proof of the Apostolic Preaching*, trans. J.P. Smith (London: Longman, Green, and Co, 1952) 69. For the Latin text, see Adelin Rousseau, *Irénée de Lyon: Démonstration de la prédication apostolique*, SC 406 (Cerf: Paris, 1995), 130–132. For the Armenian version, see K. ter Mèkèrttschian and S.G. Wilson, *The Proof of the Apostolic Preaching*, PO 12/5 (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1919) and Charles Renoux, *Irénée de Lyon: Nouveaux fragments Arméniens de l'Adversus Haereses et de l'Epideixis*, PO 39/1 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1978). For a possible Greek retroversion, see Rousseau’s suggestion in SC 406:272.

<sup>12</sup> See Matthias Bedrossian, *New Dictionary Armenian-English* (Venice: S. Lazarus Armenian Academy, 1875–1879) 700.

<sup>13</sup> Irenaeus, *Haer.* 2.7.6. For Antonio Orbe, see *Hacia la primera teología de la procesión del Verbo* (Rome: Aedes Universitatis Gregorinae, 1958).



present as well in the famous Irenaean expression “for that which is invisible of the Son is the Father, and what is visible of the Father is the Son (*invisible etenim Filii Pater, visibile autem Patris Filius*).”<sup>19</sup>

Nevertheless, the pre-incarnate Son is visible for the human being not by means of ordinary sight but by means of noetic perception, the mind. In *Adversus Haereses*, Irenaeus asserts that the prophets contemplated God not directly but as the pre-incarnate Christ in an “invisible manner (*rationem invisibilem*).” They perceived the Logos in this way either as the Lord of Hosts (therefore as the divine human-like figure which biblical theophanies portray surrounded by glory and angels) or, using a plain anthropomorphic expression, as a “man conversant with men.”

After this invisible manner (*rationem invisibilem*/κατὰ ... τὸν λόγον τὸν ἀόρατον), therefore, did they see God (*videbant Deum*/ἐθεώρουν Θεόν), as also Esaias says, “I have seen with mine eyes the King, the Lord of hosts,” pointing out that man should behold God with his eyes, and hear His voice. In this manner, therefore (*Secundum hanc igitur rationem*/κατὰ τοῦτον οὖν τὸν λόγον), did they also see the Son of God as a man conversant with men (*Filium Dei hominem videbant conversatum cum hominibus*/καὶ τὸν Υἱὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ ἄνθρωπον ἐθεώρουν συναναστρεφόμενον τοῖς ἀνθρώποις), while they prophesied what was to happen, saying that He who was not come as yet was present proclaiming also the impassible as subject to suffering, and declaring that He who was then in heaven (*eum qui tunc in coelis*) had descended into the dust of death.<sup>20</sup>

Consequently, while Orbe’s and Ochagavía’s thesis regarding the presence of the two-stage Logos Christology remains debatable, their criticism of Hous-siau’s position regarding the invisibility of the Son before the incarnation—a largely spread vision in the scholarly world—appears to be a sustainable view.<sup>21</sup> Commenting on several Irenaean passages, for instance *Haer.* 5.16.2, Orbe and Ochagavía conclude that the Logos possesses a pre-incarnate noetic visibility. Indeed invisible for the ordinary sensible eye, the pre-incarnate Son is visible for the Father and for the noetic eye of the prophets.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Iren. *Haer.* 4.6.6. (SC 100:450). For the Greek retroversion, see SC 100:451: τὸ μὲν γὰρ ἀόρατον τοῦ Υἱοῦ ὁ Πατήρ, τὸ δὲ ὄρατον τοῦ Πατρὸς ὁ Υἱός.

<sup>20</sup> Iren. *Haer.* 4.20.8 (SC 100:650–652; Gr: 651–653). Trans. ANF 1:490. We should notice that Irenaeus’s discourse on the divine economies (dispensations) and similitudes of God which the prophets contemplated prevents only the direct vision of the Father but never that of the Son; e.g., *Haer.* 4.20.10–11.

<sup>21</sup> See Ochagavía, *Visibile*, 95–122, Orbe, *Hacia*, 346–347. For the two-stage Logos Christology, see H.A. Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Church Fathers*. Vol. 1: *Faith, Trinity, Incarnation*, 2nd rev. ed. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1964) 1:200.

<sup>22</sup> “From all this we may conclude that the preincarnate Word was in possession of a sort



The revelation of the pre-incarnate Son of God in his noetic nature does not undermine the centrality of the revelation in a human body, which remains a unique and central revelation. Moreover, the incarnation—for Irenaeus and many other pre-Nicene authors—is more than a revelatory moment. Described through a complex phenomenological vocabulary, it is the moment where the Son changes his glorious Form of God (or the garment of glory) for the form of the servant in order to defeat death and restore Adam's garment of glory which the forefather lost in Paradise. The Divine Image, who created Adam *ab initio* as his earthly image, comes to defeat death and re-create Adam as a glorious image.<sup>23</sup>

We may return now to our first Irenaean passage, *Epid.* 34, regarding the form of the Logos in the universe, because it continues with a description of this invisible form as being in the shape of the cross inscribed in the whole universe:

And because He is Himself the Word of God Almighty, who in His invisible form (ἀνύπερβλητὸν ὑπέυλητὸν) pervades us universally in the whole world, and encompasses both its length and breadth and height and depth—for by God's Word everything is disposed and administered—the Son of God was also crucified in these (ἔσταυρώθη εἰς ταῦτα), imprinted in the form of a cross on the universe (κεχρυσμένος ἐν τῷ παντί); for He had necessarily, in becoming visible, to bring to light the universality of His cross (χρῖσμα αὐτοῦ), in order to show openly through His visible form that activity of His (τὴν ἐνέργειαν αὐτοῦ).<sup>24</sup>

In this passage, Christ manifests an invisible cosmic extension embracing the entire world. Adelin Rousseau has compared this text with *Haer.* 5.18.3, the Irenaean passage aforementioned by Daniélou, since the two materials envision the Logos as saving the world through the sign of the cross particularly because he pre-existed in this special form before his incarnation, namely, crucified in the universe in an invisible manner:<sup>25</sup>

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of visibility to the mind that was anterior to the visibility to the eyes of the flesh." (Ochagavía, *Visibile*, 91.) Cf. Orbe, *Hacia*, 407. See A. Houssiau, *La Christologie de Saint Irénée* (Louvain: Publications Universitaires de Louvain, 1955), 18 and also Kunze, Bonwetsch, Chainé, and Lebreton in Ochagavía, *Visibile*, 91.

<sup>23</sup> See, for instance, George H. van Kooten, *Paul's Anthropology in Context: The Image of God, Assimilation to God, and Tripartite Man in Ancient Judaism, Ancient Philosophy and Early Christianity* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008); Dragoş A. Giulea, "Eikonic Soteriology from Paul to Augustine: A Forgotten Tradition?" *Theof.* 42:1 (2011): 47–70.

<sup>24</sup> Irenaeus, *Epid.* 34 (SC 406:131–132; 272–277; PO 12/5,33+PO 39/1/178,133; trans. Smith, 69–70). For a possible Greek retroversion, see Rousseau in SC 406:272.

<sup>25</sup> See Adelin Rousseau, "Le Verbe 'imprimé' en forme de croix dans l'univers: A propos

For the Creator of the world (Κοσμοποιητής) is truly the Word of God (Λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ): and this is our Lord (ὁ Κύριος), who in the last times was made man (ἄνθρωπος), existing in this world, and who in an invisible manner (κατὰ τὸ ἀόρατον) contains (συνέχων) all things created, and is crucified in the entire creation (ἐν πάσῃ τῇ κτίσει κεχριασμένος), since the Word of God governs and arranges all things; and therefore He came to His own in a visible manner (ὁρατῶς), and was made flesh, and hung upon the tree, that He might sum up (ἀνακεφαλαιώσῃται) all things in Himself (τὰ πάντα εἰς ἑαυτὸν).<sup>26</sup>

For Irenaeus, therefore, the realm beyond the visible and material universe is not completely invisible and deprived of any sort of substance and form. To the contrary, he conceives with Origen and, as we will further see, with Tertullian and Clement, of various degrees of visibility and substantiality between material or visible substance and complete immateriality. The fact that Christ is invisible before his incarnation does not necessarily lead to the conclusion that this invisibility is absolute and denotes a complete immateriality.<sup>27</sup> Even the Father is visible for the Son. The Son's invisible presence in the universe in the form of the cross presupposes a certain subtle substantiality distinct from the complete immateriality of the Father. The incarnation, therefore, should be regarded as the passage from this intelligible visibility to the visibility of the human flesh.

#### 4. CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA ON CHRIST'S INACCESSIBLE NOETIC FORM

The doctrine of a noetic form of God finds one of its clearest illustrations in Clement of Alexandria. In *Protrepticus*, for instance, Clement asserts that God himself and his *agalma* (image, representation, or statue) are noetic,

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de deux passages de saint Irénée," in *Armeniaca: Mélanges d'études arméniennes*, ed. Mesrop Djanachian (Venise: St. Lazare, 1969), 67–82.

<sup>26</sup> Iren., *Haer.* 5.18.3 (Trans. ANF 1:546–547, altered for clarity). See also Iren., *Haer.* 5.17.4 for the cosmic extension of the Logos, an extension which is hidden to us (κεκρυμμένον ἀφ' ἡμῶν), therefore to the ordinary eye. We should mention here that Jean Daniélou points out to the remarkable Jewish-Christian tradition which identified the divine *dynamis* with a cosmic cross and the cosmic Christ; see, Daniélou, *Theology*, 270–292; cf. Justin, *1 Apol.* 55.1–6; Valentinians (Iren. *Haer.* 1.2.2); Irenaeus, *Epid.* 56; *Haer.* 1.3.5; Tertullian, *Marc.* 3.19; Clement of Alexandria, *Exc.* 43.1; *Acts John* 99; Gregory of Nyssa, *Res.* 1 (GNO 287).

<sup>27</sup> Although Irenaeus believes that God should be seen, because the vision of God alone gives life (following Deut 5.24), it seems that he considers this vision as part of the resurrected life. He appears to profess the invisibility of the Son of God in Himself, since even the prophets saw only dispensations and similitudes of his glory; cf. *Haer.* 4.20.10–11.

not aesthetic: “But for us God’s image is intelligible, not sensible, made out of sensible matter. Indeed, the true and only God is intelligible, not sensible.”<sup>28</sup> In his scholia to Theodotus—while responding to Theodotus’s commentaries on the Johannine prologue and the titles of the Logos—Clement asserts that none of the existing realities (the Son included) is bereft of form and substance. He expressly formulates this general philosophical principle in these words:

Whereas every existing thing is not bereft of substance, those bodies belonging to this universe do not have a similar form and body. ... The Monogenes is peculiarly intelligible and possesses his proper form and substance, exceedingly pure and absolutely sovereign, and he enjoys the power of the Father without mediation.<sup>29</sup>

Consequently, neither the pneumatic and intelligible beings (τὰ πνευματικά και νοερά), nor the Archangels, nor the Protoctists, nor even the Son himself can exist without form, shape, figure, and body (ἄμορφος και ἀνείδος και ἀσχημάτιστος και ἀσώματος).<sup>30</sup> The Alexandrian conceives as well of various degrees of materiality between all these celestial entities. He shows that stars, for instance, are immaterial and without form (ἀσώματα και ἀνείδεα) compared to earthly things. Stars are, however, measured and sensible bodies (σώματα μεμετρημένα και αἰσθητά) from the perspective of the Son, as the Son is also measured and corporeal from the perspective of the Father.<sup>31</sup>

The same theory about the universal hierarchy of beings is expressed in terms of materiality. Celestial realities are all noetic and also corporeal. The angels, as noetic spirits (πνεύματα νοερά), are not completely immaterial, but they own a body of noetic fire (νοερόν πυρ). There is also a first type of light in which angelic beings themselves ardently long to partake, a light purer than theirs, which Clement calls noetic (φῶς νοερόν). However, the constitution of the Son subsists in a sort of light purer even than the noetic one. Employing a

<sup>28</sup> Clement, *Protr.* 4.51.6 (SC 2:114): ἡμῖν δὲ οὐχ ὕλης αἰσθητῆς αἰσθητόν, νοητόν δὲ τὸ ἀγαλμά ἐστιν. Νοητόν, οὐκ αἰσθητόν ἐστι [τὸ ἀγαλμα] ὁ θεός, ὁ μόνος ὄντως θεός. My translation.

<sup>29</sup> Clement, *Exc.* 10.2–3 (SC 23:78): “Ὅλως γὰρ τὸ γενητόν οὐκ ἀνούσιον μὲν, οὐχ ὅμοιον δὲ μορφήν και σώμα ἔχουσι τοῖς ἐν τῷδε τῷ κόσμῳ σώμασιν. ... Ἐκεῖ δὲ ὁ Μονογενῆς και ἰδίως νοερός, ἰδέα ἰδέα και οὐσία ἰδέα κεκρημένος, ἄκρωσ εἰλικρινεῖ και ἡγεμονικωτάτη, και προσεχῶς τῆς τοῦ Πατρὸς ἀπολαύων δυνάμειωσ. For the Greek text, see François Sagnard, ed., *Clément d’Alexandrie: Extraits de Théodote*, SC 23 (Paris: Cerf, 1948), 78. My translation.

<sup>30</sup> Clem. *Exc.* 10.1. For scholarship on Clement’s doctrine of the Protoctists in the larger context of early Christianity, see Bogdan G. Bucur, *Angelomorphic Pneumatology: Clement of Alexandria and Other Early Christian Witnesses* (Leiden: Brill, 2009).

<sup>31</sup> Clem. *Exc.* 11.3.

Pauline expression from 1Tim 6:16, the author calls it the “inaccessible light (ἀπρόσιτον Φῶς)” and also identifies it with the “Power of God (Δύναμις Θεοῦ)” from 1Cor 1:24.<sup>32</sup>

The Alexandrian advances a final argument for the noetic form of the Logos from an epistemological perspective. Assuming the epistemic principle according to which both the seer and the seen cannot exist without form and body (Τὸ τοίνυν ὁρῶν καὶ ὁρώμενον ἀσχημάτιστον εἶναι οὐ δύναται οὐδὲ ἄσώματον), he observes that the seven Protocists (the first created heavenly beings) always contemplate the Face of the Father, which is the Son. The Son, therefore, has to possess a form and a body in order to allow the Protocists the possibility to contemplate him.<sup>33</sup> The author observes as well that the epistemic capacity through which the Protocists can perceive the Son is not an ordinary one. It is not the sensible eye but the noetic eye given from the Father (ὀφθαλμῷ οὐκ αἰσθητῷ, ἀλλ’ οἴω παρέσχεν ὁ Πατήρ, νοερῷ).<sup>34</sup>

##### 5. HIPPOLYTUS OF ROME AND THE PREINCARNATE GLORY OF GOD

The incarnation, for Hippolytus of Rome, is a mystery of economy (μυστήριον οἰκονομίας), a mystery about the Logos and his manifestation in history.<sup>35</sup> The main character of the story is, therefore, the Logos. Nevertheless, a careful reader can observe that Hippolytus’s exposition of this mystery does not include solely the usual discourse about Christ’s *kenosis* but, in a good Pauline way, includes as well the passage from the glorious pre-incarnate condition of the Logos to earthly flesh. While Hippolytus expressly affirms that the only flesh in heaven is that of the resurrected Christ and that generally in heaven there is no flesh (ἐν οὐρανῷ σὰρξ οὐκ ἦν), he describes the Logos in his pre-incarnate nature as Spirit (πνεῦμα), Power (δύναμις), and the one who is from the beginning Son of Man (ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου). Certainly, the title Son of Man does not refer to Jesus human nature but to his

<sup>32</sup> *Exc.* 12.2–3.

<sup>33</sup> *Exc.* 10.6.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> Hippolytus, *Haer.* 4, in Pierre Nautin, *Hippolyte: Contre les hérésies, Études et textes pour l’histoire du dogme de la Trinité 2* (Paris: Cerf, 1949), 241. For the manifestation of the Logos in the incarnation, Hippolytus uses such expressions as ἐμφανούς (*Haer.* 2 [Nautin, 237]) or ἐμφανῆς (*Haer.* 12 [Nautin, 255]) from the verb ἐμφαίνω (to exhibit, display, become visible, manifest) and ἐσημαίνετο (*Haer.* 2 [Nautin, 237]) from σημαίνω (to give signs, appear, be manifest).

glorious status; this idea is significant because the title Son of Man will further play a main role in the Hippolytean theory. He further equates the Logos with the Son of Man from Daniel's vision.<sup>36</sup> This Son of Man, also called "light from light," is invisible (ἀόρατος) for the world but visible (ὄρατός) for the Father in his pre-incarnate condition.<sup>37</sup> Hence, the incarnation is the event in which the Father makes his Image, the Logos, visible for the world and visually manifest in Jesus.<sup>38</sup>

A passage from Hippolytus's *Commentaries on Genesis*, a document of contested attribution, describes the pre-incarnate Logos in explicit glorious terms:

The word of prophecy passes again to Immanuel Himself. For, in my opinion, what is intended by it is just what has been already stated in the words, "giving increase of beauty in the case of the shoot." For he means that He increased and grew up into that which He had been from the beginning, and indicates the return to the glory which He had by nature. This, if we apprehend it correctly, is (we should say) just "restored" to Him. For as the only begotten Word of God, being God of God, emptied Himself, according to the Scriptures, humbling Himself of His own will to that which He was not before, and took unto Himself this vile flesh, and appeared in the "form of a servant," and "became obedient to God the Father, even unto death," so hereafter He is said to be "highly exalted;" and as if well-nigh He had it not by reason of His humanity, and as if it were in the way of grace, He "receives the name which is above every name," according to the word of the blessed Paul. But the matter, in truth, was not a "giving," as for the first time, of what He had not by nature; far otherwise. But rather we must understand a return and restoration to that which existed in Him at the beginning, essentially and inseparably. And it is for this reason that, when He had assumed, by divine arrangement, the lowly estate of humanity, He said, "Father, glorify me with the glory which I had," etc. For He who was co-existent with His Father before all time and before the foundation of the world, always had the glory proper to Godhead.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> *Haer.* 4. The idea is congruent with his *Comm. Dan.* 4.11 (SC 14:282), where Christ is identified with the luminous figure which Moses and Daniel contemplated.

<sup>37</sup> *Haer.* 10: "But as Leader and Counselor and Craftsman for what was coming into being, he [the Father] brought forth the Word. This Word which he has in himself and is invisible to the world that is being created, he makes visible. In uttering what was formerly a sound, and in bringing forth light out of light, he sent forth in the creation, as its Lord, his own Mind, which previously was visible to himself alone." Trans. Butterworth, 68.

<sup>38</sup> *Haer.* 10 and *Haer.* 7.

<sup>39</sup> Hippolytus, *Fr. Gen.* 49:21–26 (ANF 5:167). The passage is spurious for several scholars and not introduced in the GCS critical edition. However, it is a witness to the idea of Christ's glorious pre-incarnate status. See also the following passage about the return of the heavenly Lord to his Father, a passage of clear Hippolytan authorship, *Fr.* 44 (ANF 5:167–168): "Who else is this than as is shown us by the apostle, 'the second man, the Lord from heaven'? And

To a certain extent recalling the language of the Johannine prologue, the text describes the Logos possessing a glorious condition as his proper nature and being coexistent with the Father from eternity. However, we may conclude that, as in Irenaeus's case, Hippolytus (*Haer.* 10) conceives of the incarnation as the passage from the invisible to visible. Both of them, in fact, conceive of the invisible nature of Christ as glorious. Their concept of invisibility, therefore, has to be understood not as complete invisibility but only pointing to the incapacity of ordinary human sight to perceive the noetic glory. Once conceived as beyond ordinary sight, the pre-incarnate Christ is no longer invisible but glorious and spiritual.<sup>40</sup>

#### 6. TERTULLIAN ON CHRIST'S INVISIBLE FORM AND HEAVENLY CORPOREALITY

It was in the context of his debates against the Docetic and Gnostic positions concerning a purely spiritual Jesus that Tertullian developed a doctrine of the Form of God.<sup>41</sup> In order to defend the corporeal condition of the incarnate Christ, Tertullian assumed that even Christ's pre-incarnate status involves body and form. *Adversus Praxean* 7, a passage elaborating on the generation of the Son from the Father, is one of the most evident witnesses. We are informed that the Word takes a glorious form (*specia*) while being divinely (and most likely from eternity) generated by God the Father:

Then, therefore, does the Word (*sermo*) also Himself assume His own form and glorious garb (*speciem et ornatum*), His own sound and vocal utterance, when God says, "Let there be light" (Gen 1.3). This is the perfect nativity of the Word, when He proceeds forth from God—formed (*conditus*) by Him first to devise and think out all things under the name of Wisdom—"The Lord created or formed me as the beginning of His ways (*condidit me initium uiarum*)" (Prov 8.22).<sup>42</sup>

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in the Gospel, He said that he who did the will of the Father was 'the last.' And by the words, 'Turn back to me,' is meant His ascension to His Father in heaven after His passion."

<sup>40</sup> Cf. *In Cant*: "and though spiritual Himself, He made acquaintance with the earthy in the womb."

<sup>41</sup> E.g., *Carn. Chr.*

<sup>42</sup> Tertullian, *Prax.* 7. For the Latin text, see E. Kroymann and E. Evans, eds., *Adversus Praxean*, CCL 26 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1953): 1165–1176. For the English translation, ANF 3:601–602. Here I preferred the ANF translation to the newer one by Ernest Evens, which sounds more awkward by rendering *sermo* with "Discourse" and *ornatum* with "equipment." See Evens, *Tertullian's Treatise against Praxeas* (London: SPCK, 1948) 136.

Tertullian defends the idea of Divine Form by means of an argument for God's substance. Assuming the metaphysical principle that nothing can come from nothing, the author maintains that the Son possesses a substance because he comes from the Father who is a substance, and also because he produces all things of the world not from void but from his own substance.<sup>43</sup> In the next step of his argument Tertullian adopts another metaphysical principle, namely, that a body always needs a form. Since God is Spirit and the Spirit presumes a body, a bodily substance, God necessarily possesses a body and, therefore, a form (*effigia*). Tertullian expressly quotes here Phil 2:6, ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ:

Is that Word of God, then, a void and empty thing, which is called the Son, who Himself is designated God? "The Word was with God, and the Word was God." It is written, "Thou shalt not take God's name in vain." This for certain is He "who, being in the form of God (*in effigie Dei constitutus*), thought it not robbery to be equal with God" (Phil 2:6). In what form (*effigie*) of God? Of course he means in some form, not in none (*utique in aliqua, non tamen in nulla*). For who will deny that God is a body (*quis enim negabit Deum corpus esse*), although "God is a Spirit (*etsi Deus spiritus est*)?" (John 4:24) For Spirit has a bodily substance of its own kind, in its own form (*spiritus enim corpus sui generis in sua effigie*).<sup>44</sup>

In the last passage of the chapter, Tertullian tackles the epistemological facet of the topic by affirming that invisible things—which are invisible only from the limited perspective of the human sight—are actually visible and possess body and form from God's perspective:

Now, even if invisible things (*invisibilia illa*), whatsoever they be, have both their substance and their form in God (*habent apud Deum et suum corpus et suam formam*), whereby they are visible to God alone (*solī Deo uisibilia sunt*), how much more shall that which has been sent forth from His substance not be without substance (*quod ex ipsius substantia emissum est sine substantia non erit*)! Whatever, therefore, was the substance of the Word that I designate a Person, I claim for it the name of Son; and while I recognize the Son, I assert His distinction as second to the Father.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>43</sup> *Prax.* 7.

<sup>44</sup> *Prax.* 7. There are pages where Tertullian uses the word *forma* instead of *effigia* in connection with God, for instance in *Marc.* 1.3.2. For the Latin text, see R. Braun, *Contre Marcion*, SC 365 (Paris: Cerf, 1991), 112. For the English translation, see ANF 3:273: "God is the great Supreme in form and in reason, and in might and in power (*sit Deus summum magnum et forma et ratione et ui et potestate*)."

<sup>45</sup> *Prax.* 7.

Proclaiming straightforwardly the corporeal nature of Christ endowed with spiritual body and form, Tertullian shares the same understanding of the concept of relative “invisibility” with Irenaeus, Clement, and Hippolytus, namely that Christ’s spiritual form is invisible only for the ordinary eye but visible for the Father, prophets, and apostles. The apostles, for instance, were able to see the wonderful glory of the Son on the Mount of Transfiguration. What they saw was the glory “of the visible Son, glorified by the invisible Father (*gloriam ... Filii, scilicet uisibilis, glorificati a Patre inuisibili*).”<sup>46</sup>

His doctrine on spiritual bodies, as exposed for instance in *Adversus Marcionem* 5.10, is also Pauline theology quoted directly; namely, 1 Cor 15:40 (*corpora caelestia*) and 1 Cor 15:44 (*corpus spiritale*). This spiritual corporeality is one of an extraordinary essence, since it is not perceptible through the earthly and sensible power of seeing. To the contrary, it pertains to the noetic and spiritual realm, and it is visible from the Father’s perspective, as *Adversus Praxean* 7 clearly implies. Using Tertullian’s terminology, it is of a different quality (*qualitas*), as he states in an analysis regarding the corporeal natures of the soul and resurrected body.<sup>47</sup> Thus, Tertullian acknowledges the reality of the invisible bodies and describes the soul as such a substance. According to him, corporeality—whether visible or invisible—is a *sine qua non* condition of existence. Not having a body simply implies non-existence:

If it has this something, it must be its body (*Si habet aliquid per quod est, hoc erit corpus eius*). Everything which exists is a bodily existence sui generis (*Omne quod est, corpus est sui generis*). Nothing lacks bodily existence but that which is non-existent (*nihil est incorporale, nisi quod non est*). If, then, the soul has an invisible body (*inuisibile corpus*) ....<sup>48</sup>

In the process of the incarnation which should be described, according to Tertullian, as clothing with flesh rather than transfiguration into flesh, the Logos remains unchanged in his Divine Substance and Form:

And *the Word of God abideth for ever*, evidently by continuing in his own form (*perseuerando scilicet in sua forma*). And if it is not feasible for him to be conformed (to something else) (*non capit transfigurari*), it follows he must

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<sup>46</sup> *Prax.* 15. The Son’s visibility does not have to be understood in an absolute way but from the Father’s perspective. As seen above in *Prax.* 7, there are even other objects which are invisible. The distinction invisible Father-visible Son (cf. Novatian, *On the Faith* 18.1 and 31) is one from human perspective: while the Son manifests himself in theophanies, the Father remains unmanifested.

<sup>47</sup> *Marc.* 5.10.3; 5.15.7.

<sup>48</sup> *Carn. Chr.* 11.3–4. For the Latin text, see J.P. Mahé, *La Chair du Christ*, SC 216 (Paris: Cerf, 1975), 258. For the English translation, see ANF 3:531. Cf. *Carn. Chr.* 3.9.



be understood to have been made flesh in the sense that he comes to be in flesh (*fit in carne*), and is manifested (*manifestatur*) and seen (*uidetur*) and is handled by means of the flesh: because the other considerations also demand this acceptance.<sup>49</sup>

Tertullian inserts the concept of form even within the Trinitarian doctrine. According to him, the Trinity possesses a unity of substance and subsists in three different forms:

[W]hile none the less is guarded the mystery of that economy (*oikonomiae sacramentum*) which disposes the unity into trinity, setting forth Father and Son and Spirit as three, three however not in quality but in sequence (*non statu sed gradu*), not in substance but in aspect (*nec substantia sed forma*), not in power but in (its) manifestation (*nec potestate sed specie*), yet of one substance and one quality and one power, seeing it is one God from whom those sequences and aspects (*formae*) and manifestations are reckoned out in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.<sup>50</sup>

#### 7. A PSEUDO-CLEMENTINE AXIOM: A FORMLESS GOD CANNOT BE SEEN

Commonly dated around 300–320 CE, the *Pseudo-Clementine Homilies* is another pre-Nicene source including a Christology envisioning the Son endowed with a body of glory and a form (*morphe*). The form is invisible for the ordinary eye and only the pure heart may perceive it:

For He has shape (μορφὴν γὰρ ἔχει), and He has every limb primarily and solely for beauty's sake, and not for use. For He has not eyes that He may see with them; for He sees on every side, since He is incomparably more brilliant in His body (ἀπαραβλήτως λαμπρότερος ὢν τὸ σῶμα) than the visual spirit which is in us, and He is more splendid than everything, so that in comparison with Him the light of the sun may be reckoned as darkness. Nor has He ears that He may hear; for He hears, perceives, moves, energizes, acts on every side. But

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<sup>49</sup> *Prax.* 27. Evans's translation is preferable to the ANF in this case, since ANF 3:623 renders *informabilem* through "incapable of form," a solution coming in complete contradiction with the next lines which affirm that, in his incarnation, the Logos does not lose his form, and more generally with Tertullian's doctrine according to which God has a form. Evans's solution "untransformable" makes much more sense, because the idea is that the Divine Form of the Word is not changed through incarnation.

<sup>50</sup> Tertullian, *Prax.* 2. Cf. *Prax.* 8 and 11–13 for his further discussions on the unity and distinction in the Trinity. It is worth mentioning that Tertullian affirms in *Carn. Chr.* 3.8 that the Spirit did not put an end to his substance (*substantia*) when he descended at the Baptism and took a different substance (SC 216:220).

He has the most beautiful shape (τὴν δὲ καλλίστην μορφήν) on account of man, that the pure in heart may be able to see Him (τῇ καρδίᾳ αὐτὸν ἰδεῖν), that they may rejoice because they suffered. For He molded man in His own shape (τῇ γὰρ αὐτοῦ μορφῇ) as in the grandest seal, in order that he may be the ruler and lord of all, and that all may be subject to him. Wherefore, judging that He is the universe, and that man is His image (εἰκόνα) (for He is Himself invisible [ἀόρατος], but His image man is visible), the man who wishes to worship Him honours His visible image, which is man.<sup>51</sup>

The text continues with an interesting counterargument: If the Son owns a Form, he has to exist in space and necessarily imply a spatial shape (*schema*). The author's surprising reply is to agree with the contender and also to add that the Form of the Son extends infinitely:

For He avenges His own shape (μορφήν). But someone will say, If He has shape, then He has figure (Εἰ μορφήν ἔχει, καὶ σχήμα) also, and is in space; but if He is in space, and is, as being less, enclosed by it, how is He great above everything? How can He be everywhere if He has figure (ἐν σχήματι ὄν)? ... What, then, is there to prevent God, as being the Framer and Lord of this and everything else, from possessing figure and shape and beauty (δημιουργὸν καὶ δεσπότην ὄντα, αὐτὸν μὲν ἐν σχήματι καὶ μορφῇ καὶ κάλλει ὄντα), and having the communication of these qualities proceeding from Himself extended infinitely?<sup>52</sup>

The next chapter of the same homily presents a vision of God as the cruciform structure of the universe, present everywhere in the world, as in Irenaeus's theology:

One, then, is the God who truly exists, who presides in a superior shape (ἐν κρείττονι μορφῇ προκαθέζεται), being the heart of that which is above and that which is below twice, which sends forth from Him as from a centre the life-giving and incorporeal power (ἀσώματον δύναμιν); ... It must be, therefore, that this infinite which proceeds from Him on every side exists, having as its heart Him who is above all, and who thus possesses figure (ὕπερ πάντα ἐν σχήματι); for wherever He be, He is as it were in the centre of the infinite, being the limit of the universe. And the extensions taking their rise with Him, possess the nature of six infinities; of whom the one taking its rise with Him penetrates into the height above, another into the depth below, another to the right hand, another to the left, another in front, and another behind.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>51</sup> *Hom. Clem.* 17:7. For the Greek text, see *Pseudo-Clementine Homilies*, ed. B. Rehm and J. Irmscher, GCS 42 (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1953), 232. For the English translation, see ANF 8:319–320.

<sup>52</sup> *Hom. Clem.* 17:8.

<sup>53</sup> *Hom. Clem.* 17:9.

The following passage is more epistemologically focused. The text informs us that only the νοῦς may perceive God's μορφή and εἶδος. If God did not have a form, human beings would not be able to see or contemplate him because the human mind would be empty without apprehending a form. The chapter similarly includes the argument that God has a form because he is beautiful, and beauty cannot exist without form:

What affection ought therefore to arise within us if we gaze with our mind on His beautiful shape (τὴν εὐμορφίαν αὐτοῦ τῷ νῷ κατοπτεύσωμεν)! But otherwise it is absurd *to speak of beauty*. For beauty cannot exist apart from shape (ἀδύνατον γὰρ κάλλος ἀνευ μορφῆς εἶναι); nor can one be attracted to the love of God, nor even deem that he can see Him, if God has no form (καὶ δοκεῖν θεὸν ὁρᾶν εἶδος οὐκ ἔχοντα). But some who are strangers to the truth, and who give their energies to the service of evil, on pretext of glorifying God, say that He has no figure (ἀσχημάτιστον), in order that, being shapeless and formless, He may be visible to no one (ἄμορφος καὶ ἀνείδεος ὡν μηδεὶν ὁρατὸς ἦ), so as not to be longed for. For the mind, not seeing the form of God, is empty of Him (νοῦς γὰρ εἶδος οὐκ ὁρῶν θεοῦ κενός ἐστιν αὐτοῦ).<sup>54</sup>

#### 8. ARNOBIUS OF SICCA'S EPISTEMIC ABSTENTION

We have seen that, with Origen and Methodius, the early tradition about Jesus as noetic Anthropos or the Form of God becomes problematic, the two authors assuming simultaneously the existence of a Form of the Logos and God's perfect immateriality. We have to end our excursion with a remarkable passage from Arnobius of Sicca, a passage demonstrating that the idea of a Divine Form was already problematic at the beginning of the fourth century. According to Arnobius, the human mind cannot answer the complicated question regarding the existence of such a lofty Form: "But if, they say, 'you do not like our view, you point out, you tell us, with what form a god is endowed (*qua sit deus praeditus forma*).' If you wish to hear an opinion which is the true one—God either has no form (*formam*), or if He is to be identified with some form, we certainly do not know what it is."<sup>55</sup>

<sup>54</sup> *Hom. Clem.* 17:10–11.

<sup>55</sup> Arnobius, *Adv. nat.* 3:17.1. For the Latin text, see *Arnobius: Contre les gentils*, 6 vols., ed. Jacqueline Champeaux (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2007–2010), 3:14. For the English translation, see *Arnobius of Sicca: The Case Against the Pagans*, trans. G.E. McCracken, 2 vols., ACW 7 (Westminster, Maryland: The Newman Press, 1949), 1:205. Cf. 7:34.2 (vol. 6 [ed. Bernard Fragu]:56): "... men, unable to know what a god is, what he stands for—his nature, substance, character (*natura, substantia, qualitas*)—whether he has form or is delimited by no outline

Thus, like the ancient wise Skeptics, he preached a sort of abstention from judgments in what concerns this topic.

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of body (*utrumne habeat formam an nulla sit corporis circumscriptione finitus*), whether or not he does anything.”



## SUMMARY OF PART FOUR

Modern scholarship has unveiled the large anthropomorphic trend of the late Second Temple, early Christian, and early rabbinic milieus. In general, apocalyptic literature and the most part of the apocryphal and pseudepigraphic Jewish and Christian documents preserved the ordinary language of Scriptures in its main ontological and epistemological assumptions. In contradistinction, educated authors of Late Antiquity such as Philo, Josephus, the author of the Hermetic Corpus, and pre-Nicene Christian writers tried to find new hermeneutical alternatives, from allegorical interpretation to noetic transfer, to mystery language. One of the main theoretical debates of their time, if not the central one, concerned the distinction between the literal and allegorical or noetic readings of biblical theophanies. The key discovery of our investigation has been that the most educated representatives of the Jewish and Christian communities were deeply engaged in this debate, and they did not simply reject the idea that God might have a form. They indeed struggled with this biblical notion and made an impressive intellectual effort to offer a meaning for it. Thus, some of them transferred the anthropomorphic figure of biblical theophanies to the noetic level, while others preferred to speak about the Divine Form and transfer it to the intelligible realm. In this new intellectual framework, some authors considered that the visionary who struggles to reach God is able to see the Divine Form noetically, in a mystical or mystery way. According to others, for example Philo, Josephus, and Clement, the human mind cannot perceive such an elevated entity which remains invisible even to the noetic eye.

It was in this general Hellenistic context of transferring the anthropomorphic figures of biblical theophanies to the noetic realm that Melito, Pseudo-Hippolytus, Origen, and Methodius elaborated their conceptions about the noetic nature and the noetic perception of the Heavenly Anthropos and the Divine Form. While Melito avows the noetic perception of God, Pseudo-Hippolytus characterizes Jesus' divine dimension as noetic and rational (*λογικός*). In addition, both of them ponder that mystery initiation is the main method of accessing the invisible realm of the world where God's glory is universally present.

Origen and Methodius are two fascinating authors of a different nature. While Origen expounds in metaphorical ways about the anthropomorphic traits of the Logos, both of them consider that the Logos possesses a Divine

Form. But this assumption, in fact a traditional tenet of the Bible and early Christian tradition, involves both of them in a genuine conundrum, because they assume as well a philosophical principle not found in Melito, Pseudo-Hippolytus, and other early authors: God (for Origen, the entire Trinity) is perfectly immaterial. How is it possible for the Logos to be immaterial within the Trinity and visible as Divine Form? We have seen as well that the principle according to which only material things are visible was a key epistemological tenet of early Christianity, accepted even by Methodius and, possibly, Origen.

From a historical point of view, this dilemma confirms that Origen and Methodius began to realize the theoretical problems of the noetic solution, that is, of transferring the Divine Form on the noetic level. Unlike them, Arnobius of Sicca will assert his ignorance in this topic. The solution present in the next generation of authors—solution which will become the standard post-Nicene interpretation—will be to treat the expression “Divine Form” as a mere biblical parlance denoting the divine essence. My investigation of the way Athanasius of Alexandria, Gregory of Nyssa, and Augustine of Hippo—to mention fugitively some of the most illustrious names—use the Pauline expression *μορφή θεοῦ* (Phil 2:6) led me to the conclusion that, in the dozens of instances in which they employ the expression, they always use it with the clear meaning of divine nature; it was a sheer metaphor commonly indicating Jesus’ divine essence. Among them, Gregory even explicitly asserts the identity between *μορφή θεοῦ* and the divine nature: “the ‘form of God’ is certainly the same thing as his essence (*ἡ δὲ μορφή τοῦ θεοῦ ταύτων τῆ οὐσίᾳ πάντως ἐστίν*).”<sup>1</sup> A new theoretical paradigm and a new era in christological thought were having their inauguration.

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<sup>1</sup> See *Eun.* 4.8. For the Greek text, see Werner Jaeger, *Contra Eunomium*, GNO 2 (Leiden: Brill, 1960), 100. My translation. Cf. *Eun.* 8.5.

## FINAL CONCLUSIONS: PRE-NICENE CHRISTOLOGY REVISITED

In exploring ancient world visions and theories, the modern historian of ideas undeniably pursues a task similar to that of an archeologist, since s/he has to uncover these visions from many layers of sediment accumulated over centuries. Furthermore, the present visible reality and the real or intellectual landscape are usually different, while even the memory of those ancient things has changed over time in terms of forms and meanings. And yet, similar to the archeologist's case, the discovery of an initial artifact may generate a series of excavations leading to the discovery of a new temple, basilica, synagogue, simple house, or even a city. In our case, we have started from finding the inciting presence of several anthropomorphic depictions of Jesus—either literal or allegorical—in the earliest paschal writings attributed to Melito, Pseudo-Hippolytus, Origen, and Methodius. The exploration of these particular elements has led us to the discovery of a fascinating intellectual world of early Christianity, an intricate theorization associated with the liturgical event of the Easter festival, the Pascha.

The present study has proposed a new methodology for exploring the pre-Nicene paschal materials: instead of focusing on the image of the paschal Lamb, I have investigated the human-like imageries and terminologies depicting the main character of the paschal narrative—Jesus Christ. An inspection of the background context in which the idea of divine paschal Anthropos emerges has revealed a strict dependence on the Pauline speculations on this concept. Paul's vision of the Heavenly Anthropos represents a remarkable synthesis between a Second Temple and Hellenistic trend which hypostasized the idea of Divine Image into a heavenly character and the tradition which elevated the primordial Adam to a luminous figure. Paschal imagery, therefore, is not only replete with such well-known Johannine terminology as "light," "glory," "lamb," "Logos," and the defeat of "darkness;" it is equally suffused with such Pauline christological terminology as Divine Image, Heavenly Anthropos endowed with soteriological and demiurgic functions, body of glory, old Adam, new creation, etc.

Second, since the anthropomorphic depictions of Jesus were consonant with those of the Bible and Second Temple materials, I inspected these imageries and terminologies in the light of Jewish Second Temple traditions. In so doing, I have discovered that early paschal materials qualify



the key actor of the paschal narrative as Divine Glory/*Kabod*, King of Glory, Divine Image, Divine Anthropos, Demiurge, eschatological Savior, heavenly High Priest, celestial Commander-in-Chief, eschatological Son of Man, and Judge; in a word, a cluster of anthropomorphic titles.

The divine *gesta* associated with each of these titles represent the key aspects of paschal soteriology. Thus, the study has unveiled a fascinating collection of doctrines on salvation, from glory soteriology to liturgical, *eikonic*, and divine combat soteriology. Glory or *kabod* soteriology—assuming the identification between Jesus and the divine *kabod*—conceives of salvation as the existence within God's presence and light, as the preeminent location where salvation and genuine life are possible. This vision is connected with liturgical soteriology, a doctrine which gravitates around such titles as divine High-Priest and Lord of Hosts, all of them associated with Jesus. In this case, the human being is expected to be transformed into a celestial liturgical creature, analogous to the angelic powers and eternally celebrating in front of the heavenly throne.

One of the most absorbing paschal doctrines of salvation is "*eikonic* soteriology," a speculation finding its roots in the Pauline tradition. According to this vision, Christ—as Divine Image and Heavenly Anthropos—assumes the form of the fallen Adam in order to make him recover his primordial luminous form of glory. *Eikonic* soteriology survives in the paschal materials in two versions: first, the "*eikonic* soteriology of liberation" imagines salvation as the liberation of the human being as image of the Divine Image from death's slavery, as in the account which Melito and Pseudo-Hippolytus develop; second, the "*eikonic* soteriology of re-creation" defines salvation as the eschatological re-creation of the primeval image, as we may identify it in the writings of Paul, Tertullian, and Methodius. Additionally, *eikonic* soteriology allows us to redefine the Pascha as the *eikonic* passage from the form of the servant to the form of God, from the form of the fallen Adam to the form of the Divine Image and Heavenly Anthropos. The last soteriological idiom present in the paschal writings is that of the divine combat which envisions humanity as enslaved to death and portrays Christ as a Divine Warrior who saves humankind at the end of a martial campaign against death and evil. In this case, however, the Divine Warrior has a noetic nature and offers himself to be sacrificed and consumed at the noetic banquet following the combat, a feast identified with the paschal Eucharist.

The study continues with several insights into the hermeneutical and epistemological methods employed by the pre-Nicene paschal writers. While they assume Exodus 12 as a theophanic report of salvation (not only from Egypt, but generally from the slavery of death and evil), they will shape

their homilies as spiritual techniques of interpretation in which the audience taking part in the paschal celebration was supposed to discover the mysteries the Logos achieved in history and try to encounter him in this way. Moreover, paschal commentators become wise interpreters and spiritual mystagogues able to decipher the intricate parables and obscure places of the Bible and, in so doing, to reveal celestial mysteries regarding the Son of Man, his incarnation, passion, and salvation of humankind. This discourse is presupposing a mystery vocabulary, a new terminology inserted within early paschal discourse and linked with a central tenet of early paschal texts, namely that the divine *kabod* descended to earth. However, the presence of the descended *kabod* is not visible but hidden and mystical, and the access to this reality is no longer ascension (the key method of accessing the divine in apocalyptic literature) but initiation and mystagogy. Paschal mystery—unlike the previous concepts of mystery, analyzed in the classical monograph of Markus Bockmuehl—does not imply a heavenly location, but it is part of the unseen, invisible, and mystery dimension of this universe. For this reason, its discovery presupposes initiation rather than ascension. I have also pointed out in the study that this “mystery turn” in apocalypticism represents, in its essence, a synthesis of apocalyptic and mystery terminology, which preserves the most common elements of apocalyptic literature. This synthesis encompasses as well the two aforementioned new features—namely, the descent and universal extension of the *kabod*, and its mystery or noetic nature—which entail a change in the method of accessing the divine from ascension to initiation. Ascension, however, will remain an eschatological category.

This study also argues for what I called the “noetic turn” in apocalyptic literature. This turn represents the translation of the general ontological and epistemological categories of the apocalyptic literature from the everyday language of sense-perception to the noetic level. The noetic world is not merely the upper part of the universe, the area located beyond the firmament, the heavens, visible with the bodily eye able to pierce the firmament. It is rather a realm of a more subtle nature, perceptible only through the noetic capacity of the mind. My exploration of the idea of Heavenly Anthropos can be regarded as a case study of the noetic turn. Thus, it represents an analysis of the noetic turn of arguably the central figure of apocalyptic imagery, the glorious anthropomorphic character of the heavenly realm. Since the Heavenly Anthropos is ontologically transferred to the noetic level, the visionary needs a new epistemic capacity able to access and contemplate such a mysterious reality. Instead of ascension and direct perception through the sensible eye, Hellenistic and paschal theologians will elaborate

a new epistemology of the divine, an epistemology based on the ideas of noetic perception and initiation.

This new emphasis of the paschal discourse on the noetic and mystery-dimension of reality, in fact the real place where Jesus resides as *kabod*, has further allowed us to investigate a new dimension of paschal Christology. A detailed inquiry of paschal materials unveils that all paschal writers qualify Jesus' authentic nature as noetic or "rational." Several Jewish and Hellenistic sources of the time reveal the fact that the educated authors of Late Antiquity were frequently describing God as possessing a noetic nature, sometimes even a noetic Form, inaccessible to human comprehension. Moreover, this description was most likely a reaction against literal anthropomorphism and an attempt at saving the biblical reports about the form (*eidōs* or *morphe*) of God. Philo, Josephus, Justin, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Clement, and Origen may be mentioned here. Paschal authors simply prove to be acquainted with these intellectual notions of their time. Paschal materials will portray Jesus Christ in his divine dimension as a luminous, noetic, pneumatic, and mystery Anthropos. Nevertheless, there is not a unique definition of the Heavenly Anthropos. Starting at least with Origen, the noetic Anthropos fluctuates between noetic reality and metaphor. Instead of a unique definition, the modern student of this figure discovers a certain dynamic towards abstraction, beginning with the translation to the noetic realm and continuing with such discursive techniques as the apophatic language, the translation of the Form of God into an inaccessible realm, and allegorical interpretations, which played a main role from Philo to Clement and Origen.<sup>1</sup>

While the study refreshes our knowledge of pre-Nicene Christology from the liturgical perspective offered by the early paschal materials, it also invites to a more general inspection. Thus, it seems that defining Christ as the noetic Form of God was an essential theological feature employed by many philosophically educated pre-Nicene authors. Most likely, this conception traces its roots back to Greek philosophy and Jewish Hellenistic writers, the latter using it as a response to literal anthropomorphism. Christian authors will employ it with the same anti-anthropomorphic purpose, while associating it with the Logos, the Son of God. The idea of a Divine

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<sup>1</sup> The paradigm of abstraction and metaphorization will continue afterwards with the Cappadocians and reach a final perspective in which Jesus Christ is also called *Kyriakos Anthrōpos*, e.g., in Athanasius, Didymus, Epiphanius, Marcellus, and Mark the Hermit.

Form of the metaphysical Christ, existing in his divine dimension, in his pre-incarnate condition as a noetic and luminous divine being may represent the main pre-Nicene christological trend, or at least one of the main theoretical avenues of the time. We have also noticed that Origen and Methodius already encounter serious difficulties with this solution, and Arnobius declares his epistemic abstention on this subject. The fact that the Logos possesses a constitution obviously different from that of the invisible and shapeless Father, and being simultaneously divine, makes pre-Nicene Christology different from the Nicene program. Pre-Nicene Christology, therefore, needs a fresh review in a future inquiry, in which such categories as the noetic and luminous constitution of the Son and his Form of God should play a significant role.



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