

PASCHA IN THIRD-CENTURY PALESTINE
ORIGEN'S NEWLY IDENTIFIED *HOMILIES ON THE PSALMS*

Before Marina Molin Pradel and Lorenzo Perrone discovered, identified, and edited the twenty-nine anonymous homilies of *Codex Monacensis graecus* 314 on the Psalms as a lost original of Origen¹, the two volume-treatise *On Pascha*, found in 1941 among the Toura papyri and edited in its entirety in 1979², constituted the last large addition to his extant Greek œuvre. Since I aimed at completeness in my investigation of *Pascha bei Origenes* in my two-volume study of 2005³, this short contribution limits itself to integrating the new evidence into the larger picture, proceeding from (1) questions about the celebration of the Christian Pascha to (2) aspects of the interpretation of the biblical Pascha⁴.

I. THE CELEBRATION OF THE CHRISTIAN PASCHA
OVER SEVERAL DAYS IN ORIGEN'S CAESAREA

1. *Origen's Only Statements: CC VIII,22 and H77Ps VI,4*

Although Pascha is the only biblical topic to which Origen addressed himself monographically beyond his commentaries and homilies and in spite of the highly differentiated paschal theology which can be found throughout the vast œuvre of his Caesarean period, his hints at the paschal celebration itself are extremely rare and, in most cases, ambiguous.

The only fact beyond dispute is that Christians in third-century Caesarea did celebrate Easter as an annual feast, with Pentecost as a subsequent period. In the cult-critical argumentation of his apology *Contra*

1. *Die neuen Psalmenhomilien: Eine kritische Edition des Codex Monacensis Graecus 314*, ed. L. PERRONE with M. MOLIN PRADEL – E. PRINZIVALLI – A. CACCIARI (GCS NF, 19; Origenes Werke, 13), Berlin, De Gruyter – Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2015; on these homilies, cf., among others, the monographic section of *Adamantius* 20 (2014).

2. O. GUÉRAUD – P. NAUTIN, *Origène, Sur la Pâque. Traité inédit publié d'après un papyrus de Toura* (Christianisme antique, 2), Paris, Beauchesne, 1979.

3. H. BUCHINGER, *Pascha bei Origenes* (Innsbrucker theologische Studien, 64), Innsbruck, Tyrolia, 2005.

4. I wish to thank Christopher J. Sprecher (Regensburg) for his careful revision of the English of this contribution.

Celsus, where he notes that Christians indeed shunned institutions of late antique religions such as temples and public religious feasts because of their spiritual understanding, Origen retorts that “one could object what is happening at our Lord’s days or Fridays or Pascha or Pentecost for days”⁵, thus confirming the existence of these weekly and annual celebrations. His metaphorical explanation, however, does not give any indication of their shape and liturgical elements. He neither dwells on the “date of the Pascha”, which he calls a “problem which needs further elaboration” in his Commentary on Jn 2,13, the discussion of which he defers to a future “better occasion”, which apparently never came about in his career⁶; nor does he ever even mention the paschal fast and its breaking, which in his time constituted the characteristic principal act of the Christian celebration⁷.

All the more noteworthy is the statement of *H77Ps* VI,23-25 about the manna that rained down as “bread of heaven” and “bread of angels”: notwithstanding the identification with Christ as “the living bread which came down from heaven” (Jn 6,51), Origen does not identify this bread straightforwardly with the Eucharist, but clearly understands it metaphorically as the “words (plural!), which we eat”⁸ – an interpretation perfectly in line not only with his general idea of partaking in Christ via the medium of scripture in the metaphor of eating, but also with his use of Ps 77(78),23-25 and Jn 6,51⁹. After a lengthy comparison with an athlete’s food, Origen reproaches his listener for their lacking church attendance:

5. CC VIII,22: ... τὰ περι τῶν παρ’ ἡμῖν κυριακῶν ἢ παρασκευῶν ἢ τοῦ Πάσχα ἢ τῆς Πεντηκοστῆς δι’ ἡμέρων γινόμενα ...; *Origène. Contre Celse* IV, ed. M. BORRET (SC, 150), Paris, Cerf, 1969, p. 222.

6. *Clo* X,19,116; *Der Johanneskommentar*, ed. E. PREUSCHEN (GCS, 10; Origenes Werke, 4), Leipzig, Hinrichs, 1903, p. 190.

7. H. BUCHINGER, *Breaking the Fast: The Central Moment of the Paschal Celebration in Historical Context and Diachronic Perspective*, in P. VAN GEEST – M. POORTHUIS – E. ROSE (eds.), *Sanctifying Texts, Transforming Rituals: Encounters in Liturgical Studies. Essays in Honour of Gerard A.M. Rouwhorst* (Brill’s Studies in Catholic Theology, 5), Leiden, Brill, 2017, 191-205. Origen’s failure to mention the paschal fast is particularly blatant in *H77Ps* I,4, where he ponders the spiritualised “Christian fast”; cf. below, II.2.

8. *H77Ps* IV,3 (GCS NF 19, 392 PERRONE).

9. Cf. BUCHINGER, *Pascha bei Origenes* (n. 3), pp. 838-867; 875, and other places referenced by the index pp. 960 and 967. On John 6, cf. M. MEES, *Kapitel 6 des Johannesevangeliums in den Werken des Origenes*, in *Lateranum* 48 (1982) 179-208 [repr. in Id., *Die frühe Rezeptionsgeschichte des Johannesevangeliums: Am Beispiel von Textüberlieferung und Väterexegese* (Forschung zur Bibel, 72), Würzburg, Echter, 1994, 259-295], on Ps 77(78), cf. G. MADEC, “*Panis angelorum*” (*selon les Pères de l’Église, surtout S. Augustin*), in *Forma Futuri. Studi in onore del Cardinale Michele Pellegrino*, Torino, Bottega d’Erasmus, 1975, 818-829, pp. 819-821.

You do not want to give yourself over to the athletic food; but often a day passes while you are unfed in soul. But why do I say one? Rather also a second and third and fourth; yet that is not enough! Often six and seven days pass you by, in order that you might be fed on one. When you therefore are able and come to the Lord's (supper? house? εἰς κυριακόν), you take your spiritual food and turn to salvation, but not throughout seven days, but over the course of several Lord's (days)! Yet some even despise and remain unfed the whole year; they come on the few so-called <days> "of the Pascha" and are fed on them. Do you think that these are able to fight ...¹⁰?

While Origen's preceding commentary was quite explicit about the identification of the manna with the "words which we eat", the modern reader is not the only one who may be tempted to see the Eucharist, too, behind the "spiritual food" (τροφή πνευματική); *Didache* 10,3 proves the eucharistic use of this terminology¹¹, and several passages in the texts of Clement of Alexandria show that the Alexandrian tradition was quite familiar with such a sacramental application¹². Even if that was not Origen's intention¹³, the passage illustrates what Lothar Lies has aptly

10. *H77Ps* IV,4 (GCS NF 19, 394 PERRONE): Οὐ θέλεις σαυτὸν ἐνδοῦναι τῇ τροφῇ τῆ ἀθλητικῆ, ἀλλὰ πολλακίς παρέρχεται ἡμέρα μία ἀτρόφου σου ὄντος τῆ ψυχῆ. Καὶ τί λέγω μία; ἀλλὰ γὰρ καὶ δευτέρα καὶ τρίτη καὶ τετάρτη· καὶ οὐκ ἄρκει ἀλλὰ πολλακίς παρέρχονται σοὶ ἡμέραι ἕξ καὶ ἑπτὰ, ἵνα μίαν τραφῆς. Ἐὰν ἄρα δυνηθῆς ἐλθὼν εἰς κυριακόν, λαβὼν σου τὴν τροφήν τὴν πνευματικὴν, καὶ προτραπῆναι εἰς σωτηρίαν, ἀλλὰ οὐ δὲ διὰ ἑπτὰ ἡμερῶν, ἀλλὰ διὰ πλείονων κυριακῶν! Ἦδη μὲν τινες καταφρονοῦσι καὶ ὅλῳ τῷ ἐνιαυτῷ ἄτροφοι μένουσιν· ἔρχονται δὲ ἐπ' ὀλίγας τὰς τοῦ πάσχα λεγομένας <ἡμέρας> ἐν αὐταῖς τραφησόμενοι. Οἴεσθε ὅτι ἐκεῖνοι δύνανται ἀθλῆσαι.

11. *Didache* 10,3 (FC 1, 124 GEERLINGS).

12. The lengthy discourse of Clemens Alexandrinus, *Paedagogus* I,6,35,3; I,6,40,2; I,6,41,3; I,6,49,3; I,6,50,3 (GCS 12³ = Clemens Alexandrinus 1³, 111; 114; 115; 119; 120 STAEBLIN – ³TREU), on the Eucharist is, however, at least open for an analogous understanding; the terminology in *Exc. Theod.* XIII,1 (GCS 17 = Clemens Alexandrinus 3, 111 STAEBLIN) and *Paedagogus* II,1,9,1 (GCS 12³, 159) is clearly eucharistic, while in turn it explicitly refers to the word in *Paedagogus* III,11,76,2 (GCS 12³, 278).

13. Origen never applies the term πνευματικὴ τροφή unequivocally to the Eucharist, although the following paragraph *H77Ps* IV,7 (GCS NF 19, 398 PERRONE) cryptically states that "whoever has tasted the spiritual food, knows what is the pleasure of the soul" (Ὁ γὰρ γευσάμενος πνευματικῆς τροφῆς οἶδεν τίς ἡ τρυφή ἢ τῆς ψυχῆς), and the concluding section *H77Ps* IV,11 (GCS NF 19, 407) returns to the notion of the "spiritual food and the divine food"; on the contrary: *Hier* XIX,14 refers to the liturgy of the word, although Origen expounds on the Passover as Eucharist in the immediately preceding passage (*Origène. Homélie sur Jérémie. Tome II: Homélie XII-XX et homélie latines*, traduction par P. HUSSON – P. NAUTIN, édition, introduction et notes par P. NAUTIN [SC, 238], Paris, Cerf, 1977, p. 230); also *Clo* XIII,33,211 (GCS 10, 258 PREUSCHEN) is not Eucharistic. *Fragm.* 12 in 1 Cor (*JTS* 9 [1908] 241 JENKINS) explicitly reflects on the metaphor of spiritual food. *H36Ps* III,10 (GCS NF 19, 152) relates the spiritual nourishment to the meditation on the Law of the Lord "by day and by night" (cf. Ps 1,2). The authenticity of the following references from the indirect tradition cannot be discussed in

called the “analogisation” of Origen’s Eucharistic theology¹⁴. Less clear is the reference to the κυριακόν, to which the addressee of the homily should come and take spiritual food. In light of 1 Cor 11,20, the context of which also speaks of “spiritual nourishment” (πνευματικὸν βρῶμα) (1 Cor 10,3), one may think of the “Lord’s supper” (κυριακὸν δεῖπνον). The editor’s reference to the fourth-century Latin translation of *HEX* XII,2, however, which uses the term “Lord’s house” for the church building¹⁵, suggests an understanding of the nominalised adjective κυριακόν as an elliptic expression for the church as “the Lord’s (house)” – a usage well attested in later Greek literature, but so far apparently not yet otherwise found in writings from the third century¹⁶.

Complaints about sparse church attendance are at any rate a recurring topic of Origen’s homilies; *HIs* V,2 states that “now a multitude of people is present because it is Friday, and even more on the Lord’s day, which commemorates the Passion of Christ, since the resurrection of the Lord is not celebrated once a year and not always after eight days”¹⁷.

the present context: *Selecta in Leviticum* XI,3 (PG 12, 401B) explains the rumination of the spiritual food as permanent commemoration and meditation, obviously of the word; *Expositio in Proverbia* XVII (PG 17, 201B) likewise insinuates an analogous understanding of the “solid spiritual food” of the weaned children of the Church. The explanation of the “cheeks of Christ” in *Scholion in Cantica Cantorum* V,13 (PG 17, 276B) as “those who serve the Word of God and the spiritual food (Σιαγόνας Χριστοῦ τοὺς διακονουμένους λόγῳ Θεοῦ καὶ τροφῇ πνευματικῇ νοητέον)” is ambivalent: is the latter element of the parallelism identical with or complementary to the former? *Scholion in Cant.* VII,2 (PG 17, 281B) interprets the “mixed wine” and “heap of wheat” of the lemma to have been added “in order to signify the spiritual food (ἵνα τὴν πνευματικὴν τροφὴν σημάνη)”; in this context, the two elements of wine and wheat may imply a Eucharistic notion. *FrMt* 493 (Mt 24,45) (*Matthäuserklärung*. III: *Fragmente und Indices*, I. Hälfte, ed. E. KLOSTERMANN [GCS, 41; Origenes Werke, 12], Leipzig, Hinrichs, 1941, p. 202) applies the exhortation of the gospel to “give food in time” to the bishops and teachers who should “serve the spiritual food (the only occurrence in the plural!) in time of quantity and quality” (τὰς πνευματικὰς διατάσσειν τροφὰς καιρῷ ποσότητος, ποιότητος). Some dubious catena fragments on the Psalms, which can easily be checked in the *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae*, are not considered here.

14. L. LIES, *Wort und Eucharistie bei Origenes: Zur Spiritualisierungstendenz des Eucharistieverständnisses* (Innsbrucker theologische Studien, 1), Innsbruck, Tyrolia, 21982 [1978], pp. 218-258.

15. *Homilien zum Hexateuch in Rufins Übersetzung*. Erster Teil: *Die Homilien zu Genesis, Exodus, und Leviticus*, ed. W.A. BAEHRENS (GCS, 29; Origenes Werke, 6), Leipzig, Hinrichs, 1920, p. 264; *Alii ... in remotioribus dominicae domus locis saecularibus fabulis occupantur*. I am grateful to Lorenzo Perrone for pointing out the implications of this parallel.

16. G.W.H. LAMPE, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, Oxford, Clarendon, 1961, pp. 785f., here p. 786 (4.c).

17. *Homilien zu Samuel I, zum Hohelied und zu den Propheten. Kommentar zum Hohelied in Rufins und Hieronymus’ Übersetzungen*, ed. W.A. BAEHRENS (GCS, 33; Origenes Werke, 8), Leipzig, Hinrichs, 1925, p. 265; the syntax of *neque enim resurrectio*

Along with *Contra Celsum* VIII,22, the newly identified *H77Ps* VI,4 is the only instance in Origen's extant works where he unequivocally applies the term "Pascha" to the Christian feast of Easter; moreover, it may be noted that he does not seize the opportunity to exploit the Pascha as an interpretation of the food of the Christians as he does in other instances, especially the famous passage in *HGn* X,3, the argument of which otherwise parallels our context, and adds to the polemics an anti-Jewish thrust: "It is Jewish to observe certain and rare holidays ... The Christians eat the meat of the lamb every day, that is, they partake daily in the meat of the word; 'for (as) our Passover Christ has been sacrificed' (1 Cor 5,7)"¹⁸.

2. *Open Questions of the Liturgico-historical Assessment*

It seems clear that Origen addressed members of his congregation who only came to church on Sundays or even only once annually at Easter; at the same time, the latter occasion apparently comprised "several <days> called 'of the Pascha'"¹⁹. Obviously, the liturgy of these days contained the reading of Scripture; a Eucharistic notion may be implied, but cannot be proven. Even if this is not the case, the passage does not fit without difficulty into the established picture of early liturgical history.

a) *The Horizon of Other Sources*

Arguments from silence are always disputable. This is all the more so in the case of an author uninterested in the external shape of Christian institutions not because of indifference but in view of his Platonising mind-set, which transcends the sensible world in favour of the intelligible realm as the truly important reality. Furthermore, our knowledge of the early Christian paschal celebration relies on no more than literally a handful of references from the first three centuries along with some accounts in fourth-century sources, especially Eusebius of Caesarea²⁰.

Domini semel in anno et non semper post octo dies celebratur is complicated and unusual, but clear; cf. BUCHINGER, *Pascha bei Origenes* (n. 3), pp. 779f., n. 2119; 783f.

18. *Iudaeorum est dies certos et raros observare sollemnes. ... Christiani omni die carnes agni comedunt, id est carnes verbi cotidie sumunt. "Pascha enim nostrum immolatus est Christus"* (GCS 29, 97 BAEHRENS). On the polemical construction of "Jewish" literalist hermeneutics of the Pascha and respective practice, cf. BUCHINGER, *Pascha bei Origenes* (n. 3), pp. 695-702.

19. It should be noted that the addition of ἡμέραι is a – necessary – editorial conjecture.

20. Historical and literary data as well as the respective bibliography are summarised in H. BUCHINGER, *Pascha*, in *RAC* 26 (2015) 1033-1077.

Eusebius's account of the paschal controversy does not provide any further detail beyond the varying length of the paschal fast and the contested date when it was broken²¹. We do not know when the congregation in Sardis read "the Hebrew Exodus" and heard Melito's anti-Jewish sermon²²; a vigil until cockcrow is presupposed by the apocryphal *Epistula Apostolorum* and Dionysius of Alexandria²³. The Syriac *Didascalia* mandates gatherings with readings, psalmody, and prayer on the nights of Friday and/or Saturday, but apart from its uncertain historical classification (which is likely to include a complex successive evolution lasting well into the fourth century), it mentions a time as early as 9 p.m. as the moment when the fast was broken²⁴ – a feature which would fit well with the concept of the quartodeciman Easter as "a kind of Anti-Pascha" (to use Gerard Rouwhorst's terminology²⁵). This, according to the *Didascalia* and Epiphanius of Salamis, was synchronised polemically as a counter-celebration against the Jewish Passover and consisted in fasting during the banquet of the Jews and breaking the fast after the latter's termination²⁶. The anecdote from Eusebius that Narcissus – the predecessor of Alexander, under whom Origen is known to have preached in Jerusalem – miraculously renewed the oil for the lamps "during the great full-night vigil of the Pascha" (κατὰ τὴν μεγάλην ... τοῦ πάσχα διανυκτέρευσιν), appears to imply a nocturnal celebration, although it is not totally exempt from the suspicion of anachronistic retro-projection²⁷. In any case, there is not the slightest hint at any concrete element of a Christian Easter liturgy in Origen, which leaves the content of the "‹days› called 'of the Pascha'" quite enigmatic.

21. *Hist. Eccl.* V,23-25 (GCS 9/1; Eusebius Werke 2/1, 488-498 SCHWARTZ).

22. Melito, *On Pascha* 1 (Oxford Early Christian Texts 2 HALL).

23. *Epist. Ap.* 26 (PO 43 = 9/3, 198 [58] GUERRIER – GRÉBAUT, Ethiopic) / 8 (TU 3/13 = 42, 5*f. SCHMIDT, Coptic); Dionysius, *Epist.* 14,1 Ad Basiliden (Cambridge Patristic Texts 94 FELTOE).

24. *Didascalia* 21 (Syriac: CSCO 407 = Scriptorum Syri 179, 214f. with variants nn. 210 and 212; 217f. / English: CSCO 408 = Scriptorum Syri 180, 199 with variants nn. 230f.; 201f. VÖÖBUS). For a compelling analysis which differentiates historical strata in the text and its variants, see G.A.M. ROUWHORST, *Les hymnes pascales d'Ephrem de Nisibe: Analyse théologique et recherche sur l'évolution de la fête pascale chrétienne à Nisibe et à Édesse et dans quelques Églises voisines au quatrième siècle* (SupplVigChr, 7/1-2), Leiden, Brill, 1989, vol. 1, pp. 157-190.

25. ROUWHORST, *Les hymnes* (n. 24), vol. 1, pp. 192, 197: "une sorte d'anti-Pâque".

26. *Didascalia* 21 (Syriac: CSCO 407 = Scriptorum Syri 179, 211; 218 / English: CSCO 408 = Scriptorum Syri 180, 196; 202 VÖÖBUS); Epiphanius, *Panarion* 70,11,3 (GCS 37 = Epiphanius Werke 3, 244 HOLL – ²DUMMER); cf. BUCHINGER, *Breaking the Fast* (n. 7).

27. *Hist. Eccl.* VI,9,1-3 (GCS 9/2; Eusebius Werke 2/2, 538 SCHWARTZ). In the contemporary Latin West, Tertullian, *Ad uxorem* II,4,2 (CCSL 1, 388 KROYMANN), likewise supposes that the paschal celebration takes place at night.

b) *The “⟨Days⟩ Called ‘of the Pascha’”: Paschal Fast or Part of the Pentecost Period?*

Although the Pentecost as a period of fifty festive days is well attested in the third century – though by far not universally – and is even mentioned by Origen himself²⁸, there is no other source known so far that documents the Christian Easter feast as such as a liturgical celebration of several days before the fourth century, when the paschal celebration was extended to both the days before and after Easter²⁹. Neither period is attested at the time of Origen. (1) A mimetic celebration of Holy Week according to a harmonised Gospel chronology is attested in Jerusalem in the last quarter of the fourth century and soon spread to other places³⁰. Of course, the paschal fast is known to have been expanded over several days as early as the later second century; but in the earliest sources, there is no hint that this purely ascetic practice was accompanied by special liturgical gatherings, which is also difficult to imagine in light of the emphasis laid by early witnesses on the diversity of practice, including a varying duration of the fast which could last between one or two days and 40 hours, according to Irenaeus as quoted by Eusebius³¹, or a whole

28. Cf. CC VIII,22 (as quoted in n. 5); for further sources, cf. H. BUCHINGER, *Pentekoste. B. Christlich. II. Alte Kirche. III. Zusammenfassende Interpretation*, in RAC 27 (2016) 94-108, epitomising ID., *Pentekoste, Pfingsten und Himmelfahrt. Grunddaten und Fragen zur Frühgeschichte*, in R.W. BISHOP – J. LEEMANS – H. TAMAS (eds.), *Preaching after Easter: Mid-Pentecost, Ascension, and Pentecost in Late Antiquity* (SupplVigChr, 136), Leiden, Brill, 2016, 15-84. The Pentecost period is never referred to as “days of the Pascha” in early Christian literature, and the 50 days can hardly be identified with the – obviously very few – “several days” on which negligent Christians appeared at Church.

29. The vigils on Friday which are attested by the Syriac *Didascalia* 21 (as in n. 24) and Aphrahat, *Demonstrations* XII,8.12 (Patrologia Syriaca 1/1, 521; 536 PARISOT), are more likely to be a remnant of the Quartodeciman past than a mimetic augmentation of the paschal celebration; cf. ROUWHORST, *Les hymnes* (n. 24), vol. 1, pp. 131-193, esp. 191-193.

30. Egeria, *Peregrinatio* 30–37 (FC 20, 256-278 RÓWEKAMP). The historical value of Georgian homilies ascribed to Meletius of Antioch remains to be critically assessed.

There is no reason to project a mimetic concept as it was operative in the development of Holy Week in later fourth-century Jerusalem back into the third century. Origen does, admittedly, develop the concept of a “triduum” in the exegesis of the “way of three days” of Ex 5,3 in light of Hos 6,2 in his *HEx* V,2: “For us, the first day is the Passion of the Redeemer, and the second the one on which he descended into the netherworld; the third, however, is the day of the resurrection” (GCS 29, 186 BAEHRENS: *Prima dies nobis passio Salvatoris est et secunda, qua descendit in infernum, tertia autem resurrectionis est dies*); but nothing insinuates that Origen thinks of liturgical celebrations of the Pascha in this merely exegetical context, although he may indirectly be the forefather of such a mimetic concept in later Latin authors. Cf. H. BUCHINGER, *Was There Ever a Liturgical Triduum in Antiquity? Theological Idea and Liturgical Reality*, in *Ecclesia Orans* 27 (2010) 257-270.

31. *Hist. Eccl.* V,24,12 (GCS 9/1, 494 SCHWARTZ).

week according to Dionysius of Alexandria³². A possible parallel, however, comes from the Syriac *Didascalia*, which mentions not only a full week of eased fasting in addition to the strict paschal fast of Friday and Saturday³³, but also a “service during those days (sc. of the paschal fast), when you pray and intercede”³⁴. It has to be noted, however, that if the early paschal fast is to be understood as a continuous period of fasting, a Eucharistic interpretation of Origen’s reference to the nourishment of the Christians with the “spiritual food” during the “several <days> called ‘of the Pascha’” would be virtually precluded³⁵: although concluding the regular stational fast in the afternoon was a widespread practice, the full fast at the core of the paschal celebration would not allow any food³⁶. (2) The second possibility is to understand these “several <days> called ‘of the Pascha’” not as a period preceding Pascha and coinciding with the paschal fast, but following its core celebration, whatever the latter’s appearance might have been. Yet the distinction of an Easter Octave within the festive period of Pentecost is also documented otherwise only from the later fourth century on³⁷; furthermore, early Christian sources prior to that time always apply the term “Pascha” to the first phase of the Christian celebration, characterised by mourning and fasting, and never to the joyful second phase of Easter³⁸. It is therefore more sensible to identify the “several <days> called ‘of the Pascha’” with the paschal fast and assume non-eucharistic services.

32. Dionysius, *Epist.* 14,1 Ad Basiliden (Cambridge Patristic Texts 101f. FELTOE).

33. *Didascalia* 21 (Syriac: CSCO 407 = Scriptorum Syri 179, 208; 214f.; 217 / English: CSCO 408 = Scriptorum Syri 180, 191; 198f.; 201 VÖÖBUS).

34. *Didascalia* 21 (Syriac: CSCO 407 = Scriptorum Syri 179, 208f. / English: CSCO 408 = Scriptorum Syri 180, 191 VÖÖBUS).

35. The analysis of the terminology of “spiritual food” in n. 11-13 neither insinuates nor excludes a Eucharistic understanding of that “spiritual food”.

36. Sources like Dionysius of Alexandria and the Syriac *Didascalia* (see nn. 32f.), which distinguish longer periods of less rigid abstinence from the core of the paschal fast, always maintain the strict character of the latter. This is also true of later documents; cf. J. SCHÜMMER, *Die altkirchliche Fastenpraxis mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Schriften Tertullians* (Liturgiegeschichtliche Quellen und Forschungen, 27), Münster, Aschendorff, 1933, and R. ARBESMANN, *Fasten. Fastenspeisen. Fasttage*, in *RAC* 7 (1969) 447-524.

37. Cf. BUCHINGER, *Pentekoste* (n. 28).

38. Cf. BUCHINGER, *Pascha bei Origenes* (n. 3), pp. 413-416, with reference to primary sources and secondary literature. The designation of the Easter Octave as “Pascha” is attested only in later sources of the developed Christian liturgies; cf. the references given in BUCHINGER, *Grunddaten* (n. 28), pp. 26 (Armenian Lectionary of Late Antique Jerusalem); 67 (Romano-Frankish tradition); 72f. (Merovingian Gaul); 83 (Codex Theodosianus).

At any rate, it is striking that, in *Contra Celsum*, Origen speaks about “what happens at our ... Pascha or the Pentecost for days”³⁹. One can therefore either identify the “several <days> called ‘of the Pascha’” from our homily with those mentioned by Origen in *Contra Celsum* “at Pascha or the Pentecost for days”, or assume that Origen’s congregation gathered during the days of the paschal fast, which in any case was a significant period wherever Easter was celebrated in early Christian times.

In summary: Origen tells us little about the shape of Christian worship, and often his scant hints at best do not contradict what the few other available sources suggest⁴⁰. Nonetheless, with this newly discovered homily, he remains the only explicit witness to a liturgical celebration of Easter over several days – if indeed the conjecture is correct – before the fourth century. What this celebration looked like and whether the “several <days> called ‘of the Pascha’” preceded or followed the feast cannot be determined with any certainty; analogous to the Syriac *Didascalia*, one may assume non-eucharistic celebrations during the period of the paschal fast.

II. THE INTERPRETATION OF THE BIBLICAL PASCHA IN THE NEWLY IDENTIFIED *HOMILIES ON THE PSALMS*

The interpretation of the biblical Pascha in the newly identified *Homilies on the Psalms* is much simpler and quite unequivocal; one of them nevertheless stands in astonishing contrast with Origen’s arguments in other contexts.

1. *Jesus Crucified as Pascha and the Supersession of the Biblical Feasts*

Commenting on Ps 73(74),4, “Those who hate you boasted in the midst of your feast”, Origen asks his audience to “come to the time of that feast, when my Jesus, who is the Pascha, is delivered to be crucified”; polemically perverting the intention of the biblical text which

39. See reference above, n. 5. The extension “for days” refers to the Pentecost period in the first place and not necessarily also to Pascha. There is no indication in *CC VIII,22* that Pascha also comprised several days.

40. Another problem can only be mentioned: the reference of *HLv X,2* (GCS 29, 445 BAEHRENS) to *quadagesimae dies ieiuniis consecratos* is considered an intentional mis-interpretation adapting the text to the developed liturgical situation of the later fourth century; cf. BUCHINGER, *Pascha bei Origenes* (n. 3), pp. 810-812, and ID., *Origenes und die Quadragesima in Jerusalem: Ein Diskussionsbeitrag*, in *Adamantius* 13 (2007) 174-217.

laments the profanation of the temple, he identifies the Jews, “the enemies of Christ”, as those “who boasted in the midst of the feast”:

For it was a feast when he was delivered, and instead of a sheep they killed the Saviour, who “was led like a sheep to the slaughter and was silent like a lamb before his shearer” (Isa 53,7). And do I not hear the prophet very plainly say that “he was led like a sheep”: for the prophet spoke mystically, since he knew that he was “our Passover”; that “Christ was sacrificed” for us (cf. 1 Cor 5,7), because “he was led like a sheep to the slaughter”. As the sheep are led at Passover, so too at the true Passover is Christ led⁴¹.

This exposition stands in strong opposition to the repeated view of Origen that such a typological relation between the Passover and the Passion is impossible for logical reasons, as well as to his other use of the biblical prooftexts. Origen repeatedly argues elaborately against the common passion typology of the Passover for logical reasons. Both in his first systematic sketch on the question of the Pascha in his *Commentary on John* and in the first book of his tractate “On Passover”, he argues for several reasons that “the Passover is type of Christ, but not of his Passion”, including that, unlike Christ, the Passover was sacrificed according to the law (*Clo* X,16,93) or even by “holy people” (*On Passover* 40 – a notion which is in blatant contrast to “those who hate” God in Ps 73[74],4), and that at Passover many sheep are slaughtered, while Christ was only one (while in *H73Ps* I,8 he simply equates the sheep of Passover with Christ)⁴². It is probably for these typological reasons that, throughout nearly his entire oeuvre, Origen refuses to integrate Isa 53,7 into his paschal theology, which is all the more remarkable in view of the widespread use of the verse for that very purpose in earlier Christian literature⁴³. Only in his second book “On Passover”, which for good

41. *H73Ps* I,8 (GCS NF 19, 234 PERRONE): Κατὰ τὸ ρητὸν ἐλάθῃ μοι ἐπὶ τὸν χρόνον τῆς ἑορτῆς ἐκείνης, ὅτε ὁ Ἰησοῦς μου, πάσχα ὄντος, παραδίδοται εἰς τὸ σταυρωθῆναι. Ἐνεκαυχῆσαντο οὖν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι, οἱ πολέμιοι τῷ Χριστῷ, καὶ ἐνεργοῦντες τοὺς Ἰουδαίους ἐν μέσῳ τῆς ἑορτῆς· ἑορτὴ γὰρ ἦν, ὅτε παρεδόθη καὶ ἀντὶ προβάτου ἀπέκτειναν τὸν σωτήρα, ὅστις ὡς πρόβατον ἐπὶ σφαγὴν ἤχθη καὶ ὡς ἀμνὸς ἐνώπιον τοῦ κείροντος αὐτὸν ἀφωνοῦς. Οὐδέ τι οὖν ἀκούω τοῦ προφήτου ἀπλούστερον λέγοντος ὡς πρόβατον ἐπὶ σφαγὴν ἤχθη· μυστικῶς γὰρ εἶπεν ὁ προφήτης εἰδὼς ὅτι τὸ πάσχα ἦν, ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν ἐτίθη Χριστός, ὅτι ὡς πρόβατον ἐπὶ σφαγὴν ἤχθη. Ὡς ἐν τῷ πάσχα τὰ πρόβατα, οὕτως ἐν τῷ ἀληθινῷ πάσχα ὁ Χριστὸς ἄγεται.

42. Especially Origen, *On Pascha* I,40f. = Papyrus pp. 12f. (176-178 GUÉRAUD – NAUTIN), resuming arguments already brought forward in *Clo* X,16,89–18,111, especially X,16,92f. (GCS 10, 186-189 PREUSCHEN); cf. BUCHINGER, *Pascha bei Origenes* (n. 3), pp. 63-72; 190-196; 654-657, summarising Id., *1Kor 5,7 als Schlüssel der Paschatheologie des Origenes: Das Pascha der Juden, das Opfer Christi und das Pascha der Christen – eine Aporie?*, in *ZNW* 91 (2000) 238-264.

43. BUCHINGER, *Pascha bei Origenes* (n. 3), pp. 746-752.

reasons of theology and terminology has been distanced from the first book on the topic⁴⁴, does he use Isa 53,4-9 as one of the scriptural bases for his argument that the “sheep which was slain in Egypt” was a “type of Christ, the true sheep” in his redemptive work. Nevertheless, here too, he still refrains from explicitly and directly identifying the Passover with the Passion⁴⁵. Lastly, it is to be observed that in no other instance does Origen apply 1 Cor 5,7 to the Passion⁴⁶, and it is significant that in the present homily, he amends the quotation of “Christ our Passover” being sacrificed into his being sacrificed “for us”⁴⁷. Such an unconcerned use of paschal typology for addressing the Passion and the inconsistency of the newly identified homily’s general argument and many details with much of the early writings of Origen may support dating these homilies to the last phase of his activity, when he loosened the strict concerns expressed in his earlier works; indeed, the late date for the *Homilies on the Psalms* proposed by their editor⁴⁸ converges with the assumably late date of the second book “On Pascha”, precisely in view of the paschal typology.

Consequently, Origen connects the polemical commonplace of the destruction of the temple, the supersession of the Jewish cult, and its transferral to the Christians on account of the crucifixion of Jesus on the biblical feasts⁴⁹:

44. Cf. G. SGHERRI (ed.), *Origene, Sulla Pasqua. Il papiro di Tura* (Lecture cristiane del primo millennio, 6), Torino, Paoline, 1989, pp. 33-42, to which further arguments can be added: BUCHINGER, *Pascha bei Origenes* (n. 3), pp. 306-319.

45. Origen, *On Pascha* II,7f.34 = Papyrus pp. 41; 49; cf. BUCHINGER, *Pascha bei Origenes* (n. 3), pp. 268-270; 300f.

46. BUCHINGER, *Pascha bei Origenes* (n. 3), pp. 725-729.

47. Origen repeatedly concludes that 1 Cor 5,7 implies that because the type of the Passover was not fulfilled in the Passion, Christ has to be sacrificed spiritually by the Christians (references above in n. 42 and in BUCHINGER, *Pascha bei Origenes* [n. 3], pp. 725-729). *CMiS* 10 (*Matthäuseklärung. II: Die lateinische Übersetzung der Commentariorum Series*, ed. E. KLOSTERMANN [GCS, 38; Origenes Werke, 11], Leipzig, Hinrichs, 1933, pp. 19; 21) inserts *pro nobis* into the Pauline quotation without implying a relation to the Passion: *Pascha nostrum pro nobis immolatus est Christus*. Rather, the Christians “eat Christ, the Passover sacrificed for us (*manducant etiam pascha immolatum Christum pro nobis*)” – the insertion *pro nobis* may thus well be inspired by the ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν of the Eucharistic institution narratives in this context.

48. *Psalmehomilien*, ed. PERRONE (n. 1), pp. 17-25. ID., *The Dating of the New Homilies on the Psalms in the Munich Codex: The Ultimate Origen?*, in *Proche-Orient Chrétien* 67 (2017) 243-251.

49. A. FÜRST, *Judentum, Judenchristentum und Antijudaismus in den neu entdeckten Psalmehomilien*, in *Adamantius* 20 (2014) 275-287. Both polemical commonplaces were well established in early Christian literature before Origen, who repeatedly returns to the anti-Jewish stereotypes: BUCHINGER, *Pascha bei Origenes* (n. 3), pp. 579-583; 702-707.

“And those who hate” him (sc. Christ, not “you” as in the Psalm) “boasted in the midst of the feast” (Ps 73[74],4). Therefore, after that feast (sc. at which Christ was crucified) they do not feast any more. They defiled the feast, they defiled the holy things. And even if they wanted to feast, they are no longer able to do so. For it is impossible to feast the Passover according to the Scripture only “at the place” commanded in the Law (cf. Dt 16), from which they are evicted. Thus they no longer keep that feast, nor the feast of the Pentecost, nor the feast of the Tabernacles. Rather, their feasts have been taken away from them and given to us, and for them is fulfilled what is said by Amos: “Your feasts will be turned into mourning and your songs into lamentations” (cf. Amos 8,10). Thus we have received the feasts, and in a different way than they had received them. For they received them by means of a type, until the truth should come; when the truth came, we say that we received the true Passover: “For our” true “Passover is sacrificed, Christ, and we feast not in the old leaven nor in the leaven of malice and evil, but in the unleavened breads of sincerity and truth” (cf. I Cor 5,7, with the subjunctive of “so that we may feast” changed to be indicative) ...⁵⁰.

2. Further Commonplaces of Anti-Jewish Polemics

a) H73Ps II,2f.

The following H73Ps II repeats the argument occasioned by v. 8, “Let us put an end to all the feasts of God from earth” (testifying to the variant reading καταπαύσωμεν instead of κατακαύσωμεν): “Because of the plotting against the Redeemer at the feast of Passover, ‘every feast’ has been removed from the people and their feasts have been ‘turned into mourning ...’ (Amos 8,10)”⁵¹. In contrast: “You have also been called to holy feasts according to what has been said: ‘so that we may feast not in the old

50. H73Ps I,8 (GCS NF 19, 234f. PERRONE): *Καὶ ἐνεκαυχήσαντο οἱ μισοῦντες αὐτὸν ἐν μέσῳ τῆς ἑορτῆς. Διὰ τοῦτο μετ’ ἐκείνην ἑορτὴν οὐκέτι ἑορτάζουσιν· ἐμόλυναν τὴν ἑορτὴν, ἐμόλυναν τὰ ἅγια. Κἄν θέλωσιν ἑορτάζειν Ἰουδαῖοι, οὐκέτι δύνανται. Οὐ γὰρ ἔξεστιν, ὅσον ἐπὶ τῇ γραφῇ, ἑορτάζειν τὸ πάσχα, εἰ μὴ ἐν τῷ τόπῳ τούτῳ τῷ νομιζομένῳ ἁγίῳ, ὅθεν ἐκβέβληται. Οὐκέτι οὖν ἑορτάζουσιν, ἀλλ’ οὐδὲ τὴν ἑορτὴν τὴν πεντηκοστήν, οὐδὲ τὴν ἑορτὴν τῆς σκηνοπηγίας. Ἀλλὰ αἱ ἑορταὶ αὐτῶν ἤρθησαν ἀπ’ αὐτῶν καὶ ἐδόθησαν ἡμῖν καὶ πεπλήρωται ἐπ’ αὐτῶν τὸ ὑπὸ τοῦ Ἀμώς εἰρημένον· στραφέτωσαν αἱ ἑορταὶ ὑμῶν εἰς πένθος καὶ αἱ ᾠδαὶ ὑμῶν εἰς θρήνον. Ἡμεῖς οὖν ἐλάβομεν τὰς ἑορτάς καὶ ἐτέρως ἢ ὡς ἐκείνοι ἐλάβον. Ἔλαβον γὰρ ἐκείνοι τυπικῶς, ἕως ἔλθῃ ἡ ἀλήθεια· ἐλθούσης δὲ τῆς ἀληθείας, ἡμεῖς λέγομεν ὅτι ἐλάβομεν τὸ πάσχα τὸ ἀληθινόν· τὸ γὰρ πάσχα ἡμῶν τὸ ἀληθινὸν ἐτόθη Χριστός καὶ ἑορτάζομεν οὐ ζύμη παλαιᾶ, οὐδὲ ζύμη κακίας καὶ πονηρίας, ἀλλ’ ἐν ἀζύμοις εἰλικρινείας καὶ ἀληθείας. The continuation similarly ascribes the spiritualised fulfilment of Pentecost and Tabernacles to the Christians: Οὕτω δὲ ἄγομεν καὶ πεντηκοστήν, καὶ ἔτι ἀπὸ τῶν καρπῶν τῶν πνευματικῶν, οὕτως καὶ σκηνοπηγοῦμεν, οἰκίας <οὐ> κατοικοῦμεν, οὐκ ἐν οἰκίαις πάροικοι καὶ παρεπίδημοι (1 Pt 2,11) ὄντες ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς.*

51. H73Ps II,2 (GCS NF 19, 239 PERRONE): *Διὰ γὰρ τοῦ ἐν ἑορτῇ τοῦ πάσχα ἐπιβουλευεσθαι τὸν σωτήρα, πᾶσα ἑορτὴ κατήργηται ἀπὸ τοῦ λαοῦ καὶ ἐστράφησαν αἱ ἑορταὶ αὐτῶν εἰς πένθος καὶ αἱ ᾠδαὶ αὐτῶν εἰς θρήνον.*

leaven nor in the leaven of malice and evil, but in the unleavened breads of sincerity and truth' (1 Cor 5,8)". In this context, Origen at least turns the Pauline exhortation and the application of the psalm verse under consideration into a noteworthy threat towards the Christians as well: "If you recognise 'all the feasts' (Ps 73[74],8) and the unleavened breads, watch lest enemies plot against you as well in order to 'put an end to the feasts of God' from you"⁵².

Origen stresses not only the moral dimension provided by Paul's allegory of the unleavened breads, but also, in turn, draws a negative consequence for the bodily observance of the Jewish feast as such, adding at the same time to the explicit pieces of evidence that especially women from Origen's congregation were inclined to follow Jewish practices, especially in the observation of mazzot:

Those who want to feast according to Christendom and the divine teachings that one ought to "feast in the unleavened breads of sincerity and truth", (and) feast in unleavened breads of wheat and of sensible matters, which Christ destroyed when he "fulfilled the Law" (cf. Mt 5,17) in those who are spiritual, it is clear that they fall out of the grace of God and celebrate neither this nor that feast. For that one is no feast at all: if Christ is not in it (and) the Holy Spirit is not (present either), it cannot be a feast. Please, if there are "women laden with sins, driven by diverse desires" (2 Tim 3,6), who desire to walk on both feet and behave as Jews and as Christians: repent, convert, become either a Jew or a Christian. I tell you the word of Elijah the prophet, which he once spoke to those of two minds: "How long do you limp on both knees?" (1 Kgs 18,21)⁵³.

52. *H73Ps* II,3 (GCS NF 19, 241 PERRONE): Και σὺ γὰρ ἐκλήθης ἐπὶ ἑορτᾶς ἁγίας, καθὰ λέλεκται· ὥστε ἑορτάζομεν μὴ <ἐν> ζύμῃ παλαιᾷ, μηδὲ ἐν ζύμῃ κακίας καὶ πονηρίας, ἀλλ' ἐν ἀζύμοις εἰλικρινείας καὶ ἀληθείας. Εἰ νοεῖς πάσας ἑορτᾶς καὶ τὰ ἄζυμα, ὅρα μήποτε καὶ σὺ ἐπιβουλευθῆς ὑπὸ τῶν ἐχθρῶν πρὸς τὸ καταπαῦσαι τὰς ἑορτᾶς τοῦ θεοῦ ἀπὸ σοῦ.

53. *H73Ps* II,3 (GCS NF 19, 242 PERRONE): Οἱ δὲ θέλοντες μετὰ Χριστιανισμόν καὶ τὰ θεῖα μαθήματα, δέον ἑορτάζειν ἀζύμοις εἰλικρινείας καὶ ἀληθείας, ἑορτάζουσιν ἀζύμοις τοῖς ἀπὸ σίτου καὶ ἀζύμοις τοῖς ἀπὸ τῶν αἰσθητῶν πραγμάτων. ἂ κατήρησε Χριστὸς πληρῶν τὸν νόμον ἐν τοῖς πνευματικοῖς, δηλονότι ἐκπεσόντες τῆς χάριτος τοῦ θεοῦ οὔτε ταύτην ἑορτάζουσι τὴν ἑορτὴν οὔτε ἐκείνην. Οὐκ ἔστι γὰρ ἐκείνη ἑορτὴ· Χριστοῦ μὴ ὄντος ἐν αὐτῇ, ἁγίου πνεύματος οὐκ ὄντος, οὐ δύναται εἶναι ἑορτὴ. Παρακαλῶ, εἰ τινὰ ἐστὶ γυναικάρια σεσωρευμένα ἁμαρτίας, ἀγόμενα ἐπιθυμίας ποικίλαις, ἐπιθυμοῦντα ἐπ' ἀμφοτέρας βαινεῖν τοὺς πόδας, καὶ Ἰουδαίειν καὶ Χριστιανίζειν, μετανοήσατε, μεταβάλεσθε· ἢ Ἰουδαία ἢ Χριστιανὴ γένεσθε. Ἐρῶ γὰρ πρὸς ὑμᾶς λόγον Ἡλίου τοῦ προφήτου, ὃν ἐλάλησέ ποτε πρὸς τοὺς διψύχους· ἔως πότε ὑμεῖς χολαίνετε ἐπ' ἀμφοτέρας ταῖς ἡγνύαις ὑμῶν; Further references to feasting in a Jewish manner at mazzot in BUCHINGER, *Pascha bei Origenes* (n. 3), pp. 693-695, now to be complemented also with *H77Ps* I,4 (quoted below in n. 55f); cf. also FÜRST, *Judentum* (n. 49).

b) H77Ps 1,3f.

H77Ps 1,3f. returns to the polemical topos of the impossibility of performing the Passover according to Dt 16,6 “at the place that the Lord has chosen”⁵⁴. In contrast, Origen develops the allegorical fulfilment of the Law by the Christians, again confirming the Judaizing practices among his congregants as well as the disciplinary measures levied against them: “When the days of the unleavened breads are imminent, do not make the unleavened breads again, but make rather the unleavened breads of sincerity, the unleavened breads of truth (cf. 1 Cor 5,8)”⁵⁵. It is quite remarkable that when Origen subsequently exhorts the Christians not to celebrate the Day of Atonement, he appears to oppose bodily fasting altogether:

When you “attend to the Law” (cf. Ps 77[78],1), do not practice the Jewish fast, on account of which it is fine that those who do not understand the Day of Atonement are evicted from the Church of Christ. For the Day of Atonement of old, when one fasted, was the Day of Atonement by way of a type; the true one (was), when my Lord Christ Jesus was crucified for the world, “the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world” (Jn 1,29). Thus, if the Day of Atonement has taken place in me, I no longer need to fast. “The sons of the bridal chamber cannot fast as long as the bridegroom is with them” (Mk 2,19). If you want to fast in a Jewish way, your bridegroom is taken away according to what is said: “When the bridegroom is taken away from them, then they will fast in those days” (Mk 2,20). If you want to fast, fast a Christian fast. The lawgiver to the Gentiles taught and said: “If you fast, anoint your head and wash your face and pray to your father in secret, so that you may not appear fasting before the people” (Mt 6,17-18)⁵⁶.

54. GCS NF 19, 357 PERRONE; cf. BUCHINGER, *Pascha bei Origenes* (n. 3), pp. 579-583.

55. GCS NF 19, 358 PERRONE: ὅταν μὲν ἐνστοῶσιν αἱ ἡμέραι τῶν ἀζύμων, ἀλλὰ ἄζυμα ποιήσατε εἰλικρινείας, ἄζυμα ποιήσατε ἀληθείας.

56. H77Ps 1,4 (GCS NF 19, 358f. PERRONE): Ἐὰν προσέχητε τῷ νόμῳ, οὐ πάλιν τὴν Ἰουδαϊκὴν νηστείαν ποιήσητε, δι’ ἧς καλῶς ἐκβάλλονται ἀπὸ τῆς Χριστοῦ ἐκκλησίας οἱ μὴ νοήσαντες τὴν ἡμέραν τοῦ ἰλασμοῦ. Ἡμέρα γὰρ ἰλασμοῦ πάλοι, ὅτε ἐνήστευον, ἢ τυπικὴ δὲ ἡμέρα τοῦ ἰλασμοῦ· ἡ ἀληθινή, ὅτε ὁ κύριός μου Χριστὸς Ἰησοῦς ὑπὲρ τοῦ κόσμου ἐσταύρωται, ὁ ἄμωγός τοῦ θεοῦ, ὁ αἴρων τὴν ἁμαρτίαν τοῦ κόσμου. Γέγονεν οὖν καὶ ἐν ἔμοίῃ ἡμέρα τοῦ ἰλασμοῦ, οὐκέτι χρειὰν ἔχω νηστείας· οὐ δίδονται οἱ υἱοὶ τοῦ νομφῶνος ὅσον μετ’ αὐτῶν ἐστι ὁ νομφίος νηστεύειν. Εἰ θέλεις νηστεύειν Ἰουδαϊκῶς, ἦρταί σου ὁ νομφίος κατὰ τὰ εἰρημένα· ὅταν ἀρθῇ ἀπ’ αὐτῶν ὁ νομφίος, τότε νηστεύουσιν ἐν ἐκείναις ταῖς ἡμέραις. Εἰ θέλεις νηστεύειν, νήστευε νηστείαν Χριστιανὴν. Ἐδίδαξεν ὁ νομοθέτης τῶν ἐθνῶν εἰπὼν· ὅταν νηστεύῃς, ἀλειψαί σου τὴν κεφαλὴν καὶ τὸ πρόσωπόν σου νίψαι καὶ πρόσευξαι τῷ πατρὶ σου τῷ ἐν κρυπτῷ, ἵνα μὴ φανῆς νηστεύων τοῖς ἀνθρώποις.

The appeal to Mk 2,19f. in order to vindicate a Christian way of fasting adds to the evidence of other texts that Origen obviously was not aware of (or did not support) the tradition attested by Tertullian and the Syriac *Didascalia* to use this proof-text to motivate the paschal fast with the motif of the bridegroom being taken away⁵⁷. If – what may be taken as granted in view of Eusebius’ account of the paschal controversy which attributes a pivotal role to the communities of Caesarea and Jerusalem⁵⁸ – Origen’s congregation did perform the paschal fast (which he, however, never mentions), Origen’s refusal to acknowledge this constitutive Christian practice even when he exhorts his flock to “fast in a Christian way” is not only striking, but makes the anti-Jewish stance of his argument appear downright impudent.

c) H73Ps III,5

For the sake of completeness, *H73Ps* III,5 must be mentioned. Reading v. 17, “You made summer and spring”, in a spiritualised way, Origen admonishes his audience:

If you want to recognise the spring in the soul, cross over from the bodily Passover, when it happens in the springtime, and behold for me the Passover about which the Apostle says: “Our Passover has been sacrificed: Christ” (1 Cor 5,7). We know that according to this Passover spring has come about from God, such as when the bridegroom calls the soul (his) bride and says: “Winter is past and has gone away, the flowers have appeared on earth” (Cant 2,11f.)⁵⁹.

III. SUMMARY

The newly found *Homilies on the Psalms* partially confirm what is known from other works of Origen. Notably, their harsh anti-Jewish polemic is not new, and it is also attested otherwise that women of Origen’s congregation were particularly tempted to observe the Jewish feast of mazzot. The explicit application of 1 Cor 5,7 to the Passion,

57. BUCHINGER, *Pascha bei Origenes* (n. 3), pp. 810f. with n. 2385.

58. *Hist. Eccl.* V,23,3; 25 (GCS 9/1, 488; 496 SCHWARTZ).

59. GCS NF 19, 259 PERRONE: Εἰ δὲ θέλεις νοῆσαι τὸ ἔαρ τὸ ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ, μετὰ βῆ μοι ἀπὸ τοῦ πάσχα τοῦ σωματικοῦ, ὅταν γίνηται τῷ καιρῷ τοῦ ἔαρος, καὶ ἴδε μοι τὸ πάσχα περὶ οὗ λέγει ὁ ἀπόστολος: τὸ πάσχα ἡμῶν ἐτύθη Χριστός. Οἴδαμεν κατὰ τοῦτο τὸ πάσχα ἔαρ ὑπὸ θεοῦ γεγενημένον, οἷον ὅτε νυμφίος καλεῖ τὴν νύμφην ψυχὴν καὶ λέγει· ὁ χειμὼν παρήλθεν, ἐπορεύθη ἑαυτῷ, τὰ ἄνθη ὥφθη ἐν τῇ γῆ. On Cant 2,11f. and Passover in Origen, cf. BUCHINGER, *Pascha bei Origenes* (n. 3), pp. 350f.; 461f., n. 453f.; 691; 758.

however, stands in stark contrast with Origen's otherwise quite consequent reservation towards the Pascha-Passion typology. The hint at a celebration of Easter over several "‹days› called 'of the Pascha'" is not only based on an – inevitable and reasonable – conjecture, but also remains erratic in the history of the Christian Easter liturgy of the first three centuries, either referring to liturgical gatherings in the period of the paschal fast or – hardly plausible in light of the use of "Pascha" in early Christian literature – to services in the days after Easter Sunday.

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