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PHILONIC MODELS OF EUCHARISTIA IN THE EUCHARIST OF ORIGEN

Jean LAPORTE

RÉSUMÉ. — Dans la présente étude sur l'Eucharistie d'Origène, la méthode de l'auteur consiste à partir, non pas uniquement de la tradition chrétienne antérieure, mais, et avant tout, des thèmes eucharistiques philoniens qu'il a présentés récemment dans son livre sur L'Eucharistie chez Philon d'Alexandrie. Il retrouve ces thèmes — ou modèles — philoniens à la base de la réflexion origénienne sur l'Eucharistie, enrichis de l'apport du Mystère chrétien de la Rédemption et de la pratique eucharistique, qu'ils contribuent en retour à approfondir au moyen de l'allégorie sur la liturgie du Temple et la Loi de Moïse.

THE PRESENT paper deals with Origen's teaching on the Eucharist, and proposes to show how Origen reflects Philo's teaching on *eucharistia*.

Origen's understanding of the Eucharist is not a new topic. The two last contributions have the merit of including a survey of the Philonic *eucharistia*. R. J. Daly has a long section on Philo in his *Christian Sacrifice*,¹ and is the author of a short but suggestive article on Origen's Eucharist. Lothar Lies' excellent study, *Word und Eucharistie bei Origenes*,² among other scholarship, relies on my *Doctrine eucharistique chez Philon d'Alexandrie*.³ He does not, however, use Philo's teachings on *eucharistia* as a tool of research in Origen, but, leaving Philo behind, he confines himself to the Christian tradition, and focusses on Origen's spiritualization of the Christian Eucharist. We must also take in consideration F. M. Young's study on *The Use of Sacrificial Ideas in Greek Christian Writers from the New Testament to John*

1. R. J. DALY, *Christian Sacrifice: The Judeo-Christian Background before Origen*, Studies in Christian Antiquity 18 (Washington, 1978), pp. 389-497. *Id.* "Sacrifice in Origen," *Studia Patristica* II (Berlin, 1972), pp. 125-129.
2. L. LIES, *Word und Eucharistie bei Origenes. Zur Spiritualisierungstendenz des Eucharistieverstandnisses* (Munich, 1978).
3. J. LAPORTE, *La doctrine eucharistique chez Philon d'Alexandrie*, (Paris 1972); now, *Eucharistia in Philo*, (New York 1982).

Chrysostom,⁴ which focusses on Origen. Concerning this interesting book, I shall add a few remarks at the end on its methodology, and compare it to mine. Of course, I shall not repeat, but simply refer to, what I wrote in my own study on the Philonic *eucharistia*.

My method in the present analysis of the Origenian Eucharist precisely consists of using as tools of investigation the chief biblical themes (laws, ritual, events, characters) through which Philo develops his teaching on *eucharistia*. The fact that these themes and images reappear in Origen points to the conceptual identity existing between the two theologians. But the differences clearly show how Origen, because he refers to Christ, deeply transforms the Philonic themes in the light of the Last Supper, of the Gospel of John, of Paul, and of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

I shall successively consider the biblical themes, 1) of the first-fruits and sacrifices as images of thanksgiving; 2) of the word of God as bread of life; 3) of the Pasch; 4) of the high-priest as mediator of prayer; 5) of the high-priest as mediator of propitiation.

I

FIRST FRUITS AND SACRIFICES AS IMAGES OF THANKSGIVING

In Philo, the basic notion of *eucharistia* is thanksgiving for the gifts of God, and the most common image attached to this meaning is the law on first-fruits. Thanksgiving is also expressed through sacrifices of salvation and holocausts. Through a process of spiritualization, Philo includes under the heading of these laws and rituals our thanks for the spiritual gifts of God. Every gift of God, from the lowest to the highest, from bodily goods to those of the soul, must be returned to God, in the sense that we must acknowledge its divine origin by a formula of thanks or praise, or by a symbolic gesture such as the offering of first-fruits. These expressions of thanksgiving are not simply an act of praise or a verbal acknowledgement, but, to a large extent, they are of a sacrificial nature. The sacrifices which fulfill a purpose of thanksgiving are the sacrifices of salvation, and generally holocausts with their vegetal offerings.

Origen repeats Philo's teaching on the first-fruits and offerings, without alteration, and we may consider this interpretation as basic in Origen⁵ as it is in Philo.⁶ Of course, for Origen, the laws on the ritual of the temple were obsolete and had lost their relevance for the Christians. However, the Christians seem to have offered first-fruits and tithes.⁷ On the other hand, the Jews of the Hellenistic world, who could not regularly worship in Jerusalem, contributed to the temple, and probably offered first-fruits and tithes. Both the Jews and the Christians inclined to spiritualize the ritual of the temple, extending its meaning to the realities of their own

4. F.M. YOUNG, *The Use of Sacrificial Ideas in Greek Christian Writers from the New Testament to John Chrysostom*, (Philadelphia 1979).

5. ORIGEN, *Hom. on Gen.* viii, 10, GCS VI, p. 86; *Hom. on Num.* xi, 2, GCS VII, pp. 78-80.

6. PHILO, *Som.* II, 76; 272; *Congr.* 95-106. Cf. J. LAPORTE, *Eucharistia*, pp. 70-72.

7. L. VISCHER, *Tithing in the Early Church*, "Facet Books", Philadelphia 1966.

religious and ethical life. In this sense, Origen is not simply a witness to the liturgical practice of the ancient Israel, but he considers these laws as a divine teaching, and tries to find for them an appropriate application.

According to Num. 18 : 22, tithes must be offered to God and delivered to the priests, as a way to remember God and His gifts. Origen encourages the Christians to obey this law, and then enlarges on the spiritual meaning. The first-fruits are the work of the word of God in the soul, and the fruits of the Holy Spirit are joy, peace, charity, patience, etc.⁸ Christ, the angels, the apostles, and the doctors are first-fruits.⁹ Origen refers to the law of Num. 28 : 2, "Thou shalt preserve my gifts, my grants, my fruits," a law which Philo quotes again and again¹⁰ as an invitation to give thanks for all kinds of gifts of God, although being careful not to appropriate them.¹¹ The feast of Pentecost, for Origen as for Philo, is the feast of the first-fruits, and Origen relates this feast to the fruits of the Holy-Spirit.¹²

Philo insists on our obligation to offer up to God our good deeds as well as our prayers. The offering of virtue and of ourself is particularly important for those who are advanced in perfection. The nazir is the best example of the offering of the self.¹³ The offering of virtue is abundantly illustrated and often suggested, among others, by the image of the hands.¹⁴ Origen repeats this teaching, and particularly refers to the image of the nazir.¹⁵ But, unlike Philo who confines himself to the Law of Moses and avoids relying on other books, Origen refers to Ps. 141 : 2, where prayer is compared to the offering of incense.¹⁶ Origen understands the raising up of the hands, which is compared to the evening sacrifice, as the offering of good deeds and virtue.¹⁷ The composition of incense figures the harmonious combination of virtues : justice, piety, prudence, etc., a sacrifice of sweet odor. Every one, Origen notes, composes his or her own incense.¹⁸ Every one is priest, and every one offers up to God the holocaust of himself in martyrdom, renunciation to riches, charity to neighbor, etc.¹⁹

8. ORIGEN, *Hom. on Num.* xi, 8, GCS VII, pp. 90-92.

9. ORIGEN, *Hom. on Num.* xi, 3 GCS VII, pp. 80-82; *First Princ.* I, 3, SCH 252, pp. 148-154.

10. PHILO, *Leg. Al.* III, 196; *Cher.* 124; *Sacr.* 111; *Deus* 6-9; *Migr.* 142.

11. ORIGEN, *Hom. on Num.* xi, 5-7, *GCS VII*, pp. 86-88; *Hom. on Num.* xxiii, 2, GCS VII, p. 211.

12. ORIGEN, *Hom. on Num.* xxiii, 8, GCS VII, 219-220; *Hom. on Lev.* ii, 2, SCH 286, 98.

13. PHILO, *Agr.* 169-173; cf. J. LAPORTE, *Eucharistia*, pp. 170-176; *Sp. Leg.* I, 247-254.

14. PHILO, *Mut.* 218-227.

15. ORIGEN, *Hom. on Num.* xxiv, 2, GCS VII, pp. 227-230; *Hom. on Lev.* xi, I, GCS VI, pp. 448-449.

16. ORIGEN, *Hom. on Lev.* ix, 8, GCS VI, pp. 432-433; *Contra Celsum* VIII, 17, SCH 150, p. 210; *Hom. on Gen.* xi, 2, GCS VI, p. 102; *Hom on Jer.* xviii, 10, SCH 238, pp. 212-214; *Hom. on Num.* xxiii, 3, GCS VI, p. 214; *Dialogue with Heraclides* xx, SCH 67, p. 94.

17. ORIGEN, *Hom. on Lev.* ix, 8, GCS VI, p. 433.

18. ORIGEN, *Hom. on Jer.* xviii, 10, SCH 238, p. 214; *Hom on Lev.* ix, 9, GCS VI, pp. 436-438.

19. ORIGEN, *Hom on Gen.* viii, 7, GCS VI, pp. 81-82; *ibid.* xi, 1-2, GCS VI, pp. 100-104; *Hom. on Num.* vi, 3, GCS VII, pp. 32-34; *ibid.* xxiii, 3, GCS VII, pp. 214-215; *Hom. on Lev.* i, 5, SCH 286, pp. 84-88; *ibid.* iv, 6, SCH 286, pp. 180-182; *ibid.* v, 1, SCH 286, p. 206; *ibid.* vi, 6, SCH 286, p. 290; *ibid.* ix, 2, GCS VII, pp. 214-215; *Hom. on Jos.* ix, 1, SCH 71, pp. 244-246; *ibid.* ix, 5, SCH 71, p. 254; *Hom. on Jer.* xviii, 10, SCH 238, p. 214; *Contra Celsum* VIII, 17-21, SCH 150, pp. 210-222; *Dialogue with Heraclides* xx, 6-11, SCH 67, p. 94.

The duty of giving thanks for the gifts of God is also fulfilled through sacrifices of salvation or thanksgiving.²⁰ Philo offers interesting references to this form of sacrifice which seems to have lost much of its importance after the exile, if we consider the multiplication of holocausts and sacrifices for sin in the same period of time. Origen repeats Philo succinctly but faithfully in his comment on Lev. 1–3 on oblations and sacrifices of communion.²¹ The sacrifice of salvation, he says, is offered by those aware of their own salvation.²² He compares the diverse kinds of animals accepted at the altar for a sacrifice of communion (Lev. 17: 1–6) to the diverse kinds of spiritual performances: a young bull for the defeat of pride; a sheep for the mastery over the irrational part; a goat for the defeat of lust; a pair of turtle-doves because the soul is the Bride of the Word of God.²³ The fine flour figures the offering of an ordinary person, who is not spiritual, but whose activity is agriculture, navigation, or any kind of craft.²⁴ Following Philo, Origen notes that those who, in all their acts, give opportunity to praise God, offer up the sacrifice of praise (*thusia aineseos*), for, by their acts, teachings, words and virtues, they incite people to praise and bless God.²⁵

II

THE WORD OF GOD AS BREAD OF LIFE

According to Philo, God adjusts to all men according to their situation, capacity, and needs. This He does through his powers: Kyrios or Theos, Logos, the Punitive and Merciful powers.²⁶ The Logos is the archetype of the rational soul, and a divine source of light in the soul. The Logos is also represented as high-priest of our prayer. On the human level, Philo considers the logos of God expressed, for instance, in Scripture, as the food of the soul: the manna is a heavenly bread, the word of God. As adjusted to the particular taste of everyone, the manna figures the word of God which can satisfy all our needs.²⁷ When interpreted spiritually, it can lead us from the most corporeal representation to the most sublime understanding.²⁸

In Origen, the divine Logos is personal, and adjusts to every situation and need. The divine Logos spoke through the prophets, and is the real author of the words of Scripture.²⁹ He became man in order to offer up his blood for the remission of our

20. PHILO, *Sp. Leg.* I, 212–225; 251–252; cf. J. LAPORTE, *Eucharistia*, pp. 55–59.

21. ORIGEN, *Hom. on Lev.* v, 12, SCH 286, pp. 256–266.

22. ORIGEN, *Hom. on Lev.* ii, 2, SCH 286, p. 98.

23. ORIGEN, *Hom. on Lev.* ii, 2, SCH 286, pp. 94–96.

24. ORIGEN, *Hom. on Lev.* ii, SCH 286, p. 96.

25. ORIGEN, *Hom. on Lev.* v, 7, SCH 286, p. 234.

26. PHILO, *Q.E.* II, 68.

27. PHILO, *Q.G.* IV, 102; *Her.* 79.

28. PHILO, *Leg. Al.* III, 166–176.

29. ORIGEN, *Hom. on Jer.* viii, 2, SCH 232, p. 358; *ibid.* ix, 1, SCH 232, pp. 376–378; *Com on John* I, 266–291, SCH 120, pp. 192–206; *ibid.* II, 2–33, SCH 120, pp. 208–228; *Contra Celsum* IV, 15–16, SCH 136, p. 220.

sins, and to help us by his example, his teaching, and his remedial care.³⁰ As a consequence of the deepening of our faith, our understanding of his human word becomes a real adherence to the personal Word of God, and through him to the Father.³¹

While supporting the presence of the real flesh and blood of Christ in the Eucharistic, Origen interprets the Bread coming down from heaven as the divine Word of God made the food of our soul in Scripture, the bread of the word.³²

The notion of the manna provides Origen with a flexible image of the word of God as heavenly food adjusted to our particular needs. He often refers to the milk of doctrine and the solid food necessary to those advanced in faith. These believers are now able to communicate with the Word of God as did the prophets of the Old testament, i.e., without the help of the flesh, without Christ incarnate, but directly with Christ as the divine Word.³³

Origen goes so far in this direction as to distinguish among Christians between "animals" and "men". Bread, which is the word of God spiritually interpreted, he says, is food for "men", but others are still "animals" because of their carnal understanding, or because of the lazy simplicity of their faith: they are fed with "vegetables".³⁴ In the same spiritual sense, Origen distinguishes between grass and meat as food for cattle and for men respectively.³⁵ More than once he refers to the "milk of Ethics" in connection with the idea that moral behavior is the chief concern of simple Christians, whereas contemplation suits the more advanced.³⁶ He notes that simple Christians do not find a great comfort in Leviticus or Numbers.³⁷ The word of God is a banquet of wisdom, connected with the tree of life in Eden, and with the true vine in the Kingdom of heaven.³⁸ The Word of God adjusts to our fallen condition through the flesh in order to lead us from the plain of the common understanding of the things of God to the mountain of the transfiguration where the disciples enjoyed the vision of his divine glory.³⁹

According to Origen again, the food of the word of God is given to the crowd before they are dismissed; it is also given to the disciples when they are subjected to the trial of crossing over the waves of the passions in the boat of temptation.⁴⁰ The

30. ORIGEN, *Hom. on Lev.* v, 3, SCH 286, pp. 214–218; *ibid.* vii, 2, SCH 286, p. 310; *Contra Celsum* IV, 28, SCH 136, p. 251; *ibid.* VI, 68–69, SCH 147, pp. 348–352.

31. ORIGEN, *Contra Celsum* V, 4, SCH 147, pp. 20–22; *ibid.* VIII, 4–5, SCH 150, pp. 184–188; *ibid.* VIII, 26, p. 232; *Dialogue with Heraclides* iii, 15–25, SCH 67, pp. 62–64.

32. ORIGEN, *Com. on Mat.* GCS XI, com. ser. 85, pp. 196–200.

33. ORIGEN, *Com. on John* II, 1–11, SCH 120, pp. 208–215.

34. ORIGEN, *Hom. on Ex.* vii, 8, GCS VI, pp. 214–216; *Hom. on Lev.* iii, 3, SCH 286, p. 132; *Com. on Mat.* XI, SCH 162, pp. 276–278.

35. ORIGEN, *Contra Celsum* IV, 18, SCH 136, pp. 226–227.

36. ORIGEN, *Hom. on Num.* xxxvii, 1, GCS VII, p. 256.

37. ORIGEN, *Hom. on Num.* xxvii, 1, GCS VII, pp. 256–258.

38. ORIGEN, *First Princ* II xi, 3, SCH 252, p. 398; *Hom. on Gen.* xvi, 4, GCS VI, p. 141; *Hom. on Lev.* xvi, 2, GCS VI, p. a496; *ibid.* xvi, 5, GCS VI, pp. 499–501.

39. ORIGEN, *Contra Celsum* IV, 15–16, SCH 136, p. 220.

40. ORIGEN, *Hom. on Gen.* xii, 5, GCS VI, pp. 110–113; *Com. on Mat.* XI, 4, SCH 162, p. 284.

word of God has a purifying power in association with the confession of sins.⁴¹ The word of God is a weapon against the devil.⁴² Like the manna which turned from food into worms on the second day, the word of God has opposite effects: divine food for some, condemnation for others.⁴³

In relation to the eucharistic bread, Origen speaks of eating the flesh of the word, *de carnibus verbi*, in two senses: as the flesh of the Word incarnate, or simply as the flesh of the word of Scripture.⁴⁴ For Origen, there is no contradiction, but identity, because ultimately both mean to adhere to, and feed on, the divine Word.⁴⁵ For this reason, he recommends the same care for the word of God given from the pulpit, as for the crumbs of the eucharistic bread.⁴⁶ He says that we drink the blood of Christ in the mysteries and also when we receive the word of God.⁴⁷ The flesh of the Lord heals and sanctifies by contact those who touch it, but the Gentiles, Origen notes, rather than the Jews, touched and ate the solid food of the flesh of the Word.⁴⁸ The word of Scripture, which is the flesh of the Word, must not be eaten raw, i.e., literally, but cooked in the fire of the Spirit.⁴⁹ The spiritual interpreter of the Old Testament knows the nature of the flesh of the Word, which is Scripture, and what is the true food: Jesus, the Bread of Life.⁵⁰

More than once, concerning the eucharistic bread and wine, Origen mentions a consecration. In *Contra Celsum*, he says that “this bread becomes by prayer a sacred body, which sanctifies those who sincerely partake of it.”⁵¹ In the same context, he speaks of a “bread of blessing.”

In his *Commentary on Matthew*, he says that the bread which is sanctified through the word of God (probably the words of Institution), and prayer (*epiclesis*, or *anaphora*), does not, in its own nature, sanctify those who use it; for if it were so, it would also sanctify those who eat the bread of the Lord unworthily. It is not the material bread but the word of God said over it which profits those who eat worthily.⁵²

The last two texts show that a word of the Lord, a prayer, a blessing are necessary for the consecration of the eucharistic bread. The term “blessing” must be given its full meaning as a word of God conferring a power, a grace. Origen uses the term *eulogia* instead of *eucharistia* for the eucharistic prayer and bread.⁵³ I have

41. ORIGEN, *Hom. on Lev.* iii, 4, SCH 286, p. 140; *Hom. on Num.* xiv, 2, GCS VII, p. 125; *Hom. on Jos.* xx, 1-2, SCH 71, pp. 406-414; *Hom. on Jer.* ii, 2, SCH 232, p. 242.

42. ORIGEN, *Hom. on Num.* xiii, 4-7, GCS VII, pp. 110-118; *Hom. on Jos.* xxvi, 2, SCH 71, pp. 494-496.

43. ORIGEN, *Hom. on Ex.* vii, 8, GCS VI, p. 216; *Hom. on Num.* III, 1, GCS VII, p. 13.

44. ORIGEN, *Hom. on Gen.* x, 3, GCS VI, p. 97; *Hom. on Num.* xxiii, 6, GCS VII, p. 218.

45. ORIGEN, *Hom. on Gen.* x, 2-4, GCS VI, pp. 95-97; *Hom. on Num.* xxiii, 4, GCS VII, pp. 215-217.

46. ORIGEN, *Hom. on Ex.* xiii, 3, GCS VI, p. 274.

47. ORIGEN, *Hom. on Num.* xvi, 9, GCS VII, pp. 151-152.

48. ORIGEN, *Hom. on Lev.* iv, 8, SCH 286, pp. 188-190.

49. ORIGEN, *Com. on John* X, 103, SCH 157, p. 444.

50. ORIGEN, *Com. on Mat.* GCS XI, com. ser. 10, p. 21.

51. ORIGEN, *Com. on Mat.* GCS XI, com. ser. 86, p. 199; *Com. on Mat.* X, 2, SCH 162, p. 272.

52. ORIGEN, *Com. on Mat.* XXI, 14, SCH 162, p. 346.

53. L. LIES, pp. 294-330.

shown in my own study on *Eucharistia* in Philo that Philo reserved the use of *eulogia* for the blessing of food by God in the prayers at meals.⁵⁴ It seems that Origen similarly assimilates the Eucharistic to a blessing because the emphasis in Christianity is laid on the bread and wine which are food and confer a grace.

The question of the « real presence » is not the last word or the chief concern of Origen in his discussion of the Eucharist. As L. Lies explains,⁵⁵ the flesh and blood of Christ, — the reality which the bread and wine are pointing to, — are, in their turn, pointing to another reality which is the divine Word coming from heaven and feeding our souls with the word of Scripture.⁵⁶ All the texts on the eucharistic bread suggest the same conclusion: the bread is the word of God. The soul cannot receive another food but the word, i.e., the bread coming from the mouth of the divine Word.⁵⁷

However, although the wine as well as the bread can refer to the word of God,⁵⁸ the symbolism of the wine points to the blood poured for the remission of sins, whereas the symbolism of the bread points to the word of God, which is properly the food of our souls.⁵⁹

III

THE PASCH

We can also use Philo's teaching on the Pasch as a model for the investigation of Origen's doctrine of the Eucharist.

Philo on the Pasch

Philo literally interprets the Passover as a gesture of thanksgiving for the deliverance of the people of Israel from Egypt and the crossing of the Red Sea. This thanksgiving, of course, includes the lasting consequences of this redemptive event.⁶⁰ It finds expression in the song and dance of two choirs, one of men, the other of women, on the sea-shore.⁶¹ This celebration with hymns of thanksgiving for the victory over Pharaoh and his army was well known and in actual practice in the time of Philo, since he frequently alludes to it, and obviously describes it in the Pentecostal ritual of the Therapeutae.⁶² Philo notes that the Israelites spontaneously offered a sacrifice of thanksgiving for their salvation, without waiting for the service of priests, which was instituted only later. This spontaneous gesture turned the people of Israel

54. J. LAPORTE, *Eucharistia*, pp. 30-31.

55. L. LIES, pp. 228-240.

56. ORIGEN, *Hom. on Lev.* v, 7, SCH 286, pp. 237-243; *Contra Celsum* IV, 34-35, SCH 136, p. 271.

57. ORIGEN, *Hom. on Lev.* vii, 5, SCH 286, pp. 336-342; *Com. on John* VI, 270, SCH 157, p. 334; *ibid.* X, 99-111, SCH 157, pp. 440-448; *ibid.* XIII, 197-199, SCH 222, p. 140; *ibid.* XIII, 273-286, pp. 178-186.

58. ORIGEN, *Com. on Mat.* GCS XI, com. ser. 85, p. 196.

59. ORIGEN, *Com. on Mat.* GCS com. ser. 85, pp. 195-200. Cf. L. LIES, pp. 228-235.

60. PHILO, *Q.E.* I, 10; *Mos.* I, 180.

61. PHILO, *Cont.* 83-90; *Mos.* I, 80; *Som.* II, 268-271.

62. PHILO, *Cont.* 83-90; in the same sense, ORIGEN, *Hom. on Ex.* vi, 1, GCS VI, pp. 191-193.

into a priestly nation, a people of sacrificers, and this privilege was not abolished when the service of the altar was performed by ordained priests.⁶³

Allegorically, Philo interprets the Passover as a “passing over”, a change of place, although less the passage of the angel of death who did not enter the houses of the Israelites, than the passage of the people of Israel from Egypt to the Holy Land, particularly the crossing of the Red-Sea.⁶⁴ Philo allegorically interprets this crossing as the passing over from the bondage of the passions to the acquisition of virtue.⁶⁵ The Song on the Sea-Shore thanks God for the victory over the passions. In this context of thought, the lamb of Passover becomes a symbol of progress, as suggested by the coupling of the substantive *probaton* (sheep) with the verb *probaino* (to step forward).⁶⁶ The crossing of the Red-Sea is associated with the march of the people in the desert, and particularly with the gift of the manna, which Philo, following Exodus 16: 15, interprets as the word of God.⁶⁷

Origen on the Pasch

The obvious meaning of the Pasch in Origen is centered around the Last Supper. Origen does not doubt that the Last Supper took place during the Passover meal.⁶⁸ Therefore, the Jewish Passover described in Exodus 12 is the model and foreshadowing of the Last Supper which continues in the Christian Eucharist, and culminates in the heavenly Pasch with Jesus sitting on the right hand of the Father.⁶⁹

Again and again, Origen refers to I Corinthians 5: 7, “Christ, our Paschal lamb, has been sacrificed.”⁷⁰ We observe the connection with the lamb of Passover in Exodus 12. This reference is confirmed by the association made by Paul of the lamb with the azyma, “Let us celebrate the festival with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.”⁷¹

Often Origen brings forth these texts in connection with the Pasch.⁷² He also refers to the lamb brought to the slaughter in Isaiah 53: 7,⁷³ and refers to a similar statement of Jeremiah.⁷⁴

63. PHILO, *Sp. Leg.* II, 145–149; *Q.E.* I, 10.

64. PHILO, *Mos.* I, 180; *Q.E.* I, 3.

65. PHILO, *Leg. Al.* III, 165, 172; *Sacr.* 63.

66. PHILO, *Leg. Al.* III, 165; *Q.E.* I, 3.

67. PHILO, *Leg. Al.* III, 169–171; 179–180.

68. ORIGEN, *Com. on Mat.* GCS XI, com. ser. 79 & 85, pp. 189–200.

69. ORIGEN, *On the Pasch*, 47, 30–49, 35, P. NAUTIN, *Sur la Paque*, (Paris, 1979), pp. 246–451; *Com. on John*, X, 67–118, SCH 157, pp. 426–452.

70. ORIGEN, *Hom. on Num.* xiii, 6, GCS VII, p. 218; *Hom. on Jer.* xii, 13, SCH 238, pp. 44–46; *Com. on John* X, 2, 822, SCH 157, p. 432; *ibid.* 92, p. 438.

71. ORIGEN, *Com. on Mat.* GCS XI, com. ser. 14, p. 21; *ibid.* com. ser. 78–79, pp. 188–191.

72. ORIGEN, *Hom. on Jer.* xii, 13, SCH 238, p. 46; *Com. on Mat.* GCS XI, com. ser. 14, p. 21; *ibid.* com. ser. 78–79, p. 188–191.

73. ORIGEN, *On the Pasch*, 411, 13–43–6, P. NAUTIN, pp. 138; 234.

74. ORIGEN, *Hom. on Jer.* i, 6 SCH 232, p. 204; *ibid.* x, 1–3, SCH 232, pp. 398–402.

Often also we find the reference to the testimony of the Baptist in John 1 : 29, "Behold, the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world,"⁷⁵ and the reference to the discourse on the bread of life in John 6 : 48–58.⁷⁶

The words of the Institution of the Eucharist are understood by Origen in reference to the flesh of the lamb of God, Christ, who has been sacrificed for us, and who takes away the sin of the world.⁷⁷

According to Origen, the flesh and blood of Jesus remain for us as a supply of heavenly food and as a pledge of forgiveness.⁷⁸ Origen does not permit us to take this food and drink lightly or unworthily like a cheap remedy to our present neglect while we are, indeed, afflicting Jesus deeply and sorely.⁷⁹ However, Origen turns our attention from the flesh of Christ to the bread of life which is the word of God, the food of our soul, and to the mystery of the indwelling of Christ in the believer.⁸⁰

But Origen never loses from sight the heavenly and future aspects of our union with Christ. Since Christ, in whom we abide, is sitting on the right hand of the Father, our eucharistic life is more heavenly and spiritual than earthly and corporeal.⁸¹

Since we are on our way to perfection, our Eucharist is still uncomplete and imperfect.⁸² Repeatedly Origen speaks of heavenly feasts for the elect in the future Kingdom, particularly the heavenly Pasch.⁸³ Like the Israelites who ate the lamb until the morning: head, feet, and bowels, but at dawn were given the heavenly bread of the manna, the Christians, in the present life, eat the flesh and drink the blood of the lamb, but this dispensation of the Eucharist will come to an end in the morning of the resurrection, when we eat the heavenly food, the bread of angels.⁸⁴

The cup of the New Testament in the Kingdom of the Father⁸⁵ refers to the same future reality.⁸⁶ Origen also refers to the blessing of Jacob on Juda in Genesis 49 : 9–12, "the blood of the grapes", as a prediction of both the passion of Christ and the messianic banquet.⁸⁷

75. ORIGEN, *Hom. on Num.* xxiii, 6, GCS VII, p. 218; *Com. on John* VI, 264–273, SCH 57, pp. 330–336; *ibid.* 296, p. 354.

76. ORIGEN, *Hom. on Lev.* vii, 5, SCH 286, pp. 336–340; *Com. on Mat.* XI, 4, SCH 162, pp. 266–288.

77. ORIGEN, *Com. on John* X, 2, 92, SCH 157, pp. 438–442; *Contra Celsum* VIII, 33, SCH 150, p. 246.

78. ORIGEN, *Com. on Mat.* GCS XI, com. ser. 85, pp. 196–200; *Hom. on Luke* xxxviii, 6, SCH 87, p. 448; *Frg 40 on Luke* SCH 87, pp. 491–492.

79. ORIGEN, *Hom. on Lev.* vii, 2, SCH 286, pp. 308–312.

80. ORIGEN, *Hom. on Gen.* i, 13, GCS VI, pp. 15–18; *Hom. on Lev.* v, 2, SCH 286, p. 212; *Hom. on Jer.* viii, 1, SCH 232, pp. 352–356; *Contra Celsum* VIII, 18–19, SCH 150, pp. 212–216.

81. ORIGEN, *Hom. on Lev.* xv, *passim*, GCS VI, pp. 487–491; *Hom. on Num.* xxiii, 6–9, GCS VII, pp. 218–221; *Com. on John* X, 2, 82–91, SCH 157, pp. 432–438.

82. ORIGEN, *Hom. on Lev.* vii, 2, SCH 286, pp. 312–316; *Com. on Mat.* X, 15–17, SCH 162, pp. 358–366.

83. ORIGEN, *Com. on John* X, 67–118, SCH 157, pp. 426–452; *Contra Celsum* VIII, 22–23, SCH 150, pp. 222–226.

84. ORIGEN, *Hom. on Gen.* x, 3, GCS VI, p. 97; *Com. on John* X, 108, SCH 157, p. 446.

85. ORIGEN, *Hom. on Lev.* vii, 3, SCH 286, p. 322; *Hom. on Jer.* xii, 2, SCH 238, p. 16.

86. ORIGEN, *Com. on Mat.* GCS XI, com. ser. 92, p. 210.

87. ORIGEN, *Hom. on Lev.* vii, 2, SCH 286, p. 312; *Com. on Song*, ii, GCS VIII, p. 171.

Origen's interpretation of the Pasch is so christological that we are necessarily taken far away from Philo. In this regard, the Gospels, Paul, and John suffice as sources of Origen. However, Origen may have been inspired by Philo who also interpreted the paschal lamb as a sacrifice, probably a sacrifice of salvation or thanksgiving, with communion, and who, in addition, understood the Passover as a passing over from sin and spiritual death to virtue and life.

Both Origen and Philo interpret the crossing of the sea by the people of Israel while Pharaoh and his army were buried under the waves, as salvation from slavery to sin and to the passions.⁸⁸ But, following Paul (I Cor. 10: 1–5), Origen refers the crossing of the sea to baptism as a purification and a renewal of the soul in Christ.⁸⁹

In connection with the Passover and the crossing of the sea, Philo develops a teaching on purification and asceticism, which reappears in Origen. This teaching depends on the method of allegory. Like Philo, Origen interprets the whole story of Exodus as an itinerary of the soul toward perfection, and every detail serves this purpose: the dress, the staff, the cooking suggest the practice of asceticism.⁹⁰ Particularly the bitter herbs⁹¹ and the unleavened bread suggests the renunciation of vices and pleasures, and the necessary struggle of virtue.

According to Origen, the elimination of the old azyma figures the elimination of small sins, and the new azyma of sincerity and truth suggests the practice of chastity.⁹² Bitter herbs and azyma are an incitement to repentance,⁹³ leading to the rejection of our habits of sin which are implanted in ourselves like a second nature.⁹⁴

The lamb is the most suggestive symbol of the Pasch. For both Philo and Origen it figures progress (from *probaton*, sheep), the endless progress toward perfection,⁹⁵ which is also suggested by the march of the tribes and their tents in the wilderness.⁹⁶ Origen relies on these figures when he teaches the necessity of a moral purification previous to an act of worship⁹⁷, and when he considers endless progress as essential to the idea of perfection.⁹⁸

88. ORIGEN, *Com. on Mat.* XI, 5, SCH 162, pp. 290–298.

89. ORIGEN, *Hom. on Ex.* v, vi, GCS VI, pp. 183–204.

90. ORIGEN, *On the Pasch* 27–39, P. NAUTIN, pp. 129–136.

91. ORIGEN, *Contra Celsum* VIII, 23, cf. 29, SCH 150, pp. 224–226; 236. Cf. PHILO, *Q.E.* I, 15.

92. ORIGEN, *Hom. on Num.* xxiii, 7, GCS VII, p. 219; *Com. on Mat.* GCS XI, com. ser. 78, p. 21.

93. ORIGEN, *Hom. on Num.* xiii, 7, GCS VII, p. 219; *Com. on Mat.* GCS XI, com. ser. 78, pp. 175–177; *Com. on John* X, 99–102, SCH 157, p. 442.

94. ORIGEN, *Hom. on Jos.* x, 3, SCH 71, p. 276.

95. ORIGEN, *On the Pasch* 18–21, P. NAUTIN, pp. 125; 189–195; cf. PHILO, *Congr.* 106.

96. *Hom. on Num.* ii, 1, GCS VII, pp. 8–10; *ibid.* xvii, 4, GCS VII, pp. 159–164.

97. ORIGEN, *Hom. on Lev.* v, 7, SCH 286, p. 234; v, 10, pp. 248–252; vii, 11–12, pp. 252–256; viii, 2–3, GCS VI, pp. 394–396; *Com. on Mat.* XX, 15, SCH 162, pp. 236–264; XI, p. 352; *Contra Celsum* VIII, 73, SCH 150, p. 346.

98. ORIGEN, *Hom. on Num.* xvii, 4, GCS VII, pp. 159–164.

IV
THE HIGH-PRIEST MEDIATOR OF PRAYER

Two aspects of Christ the high-priest can be distinguished in Origen: the mediator of praise and thanksgiving, and the mediator of forgiveness and salvation. The first belongs to Christ as the Son or Word of God; the second to Christ as man. Philo develops the first aspect, and gives clues for the second.

The High-Priest, Mediator of Prayer in Philo

Philo explains that, according to the myth of the Muses and their mother Mnemosyne, the race of poets was created in order to proclaim the divine perfections and to give to the Creator the homage of praise and thanksgiving for the beauty of the universe. No invention or exaggeration, Philo insists, is relevant to this praise, but only a faithful memory of his works. The name of Mnemosyne, or "Memory", suggested this idea.⁹⁹

Just like the heavens and the choir of the stars, the human mind has received a vocation of praise of God in the universe.¹⁰⁰ We fulfill this mission through psalms, hymns, odes, and hymnody.¹⁰¹ Philo describes the contents of this praise when he deals with the symbolism of the division of the holocaust. He mentions the different parts of the universe, of mankind, and of the individual man, but dissuades from entering the triviality of detail.¹⁰²

Praise and thanksgiving are particularly the duty of the high-priest, who can be described as the worshipper by excellence.

First, Philo refers to the human high-priest of the temple of Jerusalem, who daily offers the holocaust and vegetable offerings as thanksgiving in the name of the nation of Israel and even of the whole human kind.¹⁰³ His *eucharistia* is universal in the sense that it is made for all men and all things, since all creation is the gift of God. The best illustration of this idea is the interpretation of the robe of the high-priest as a symbol of the universe.¹⁰⁴

However, the true high-priest of the universe is the divine Logos himself. As demiurge, he wears the universe as a robe, and in the cosmic worship, he is the author and true expression of the prayer of the world.

The counterpart of the divine Logos in the individual man is the human logos, or reason, which fulfills the same function of worshipper in the anthropos, which is a microcosm.¹⁰⁵ Philo interiorizes the notion of the priesthood, of the altar, of

99. PHILO, *Plant.* 126–129.

100. PHILO, *Som.* I, 35; *Q.E.* II, 73.

101. PHILO, *Som.* I, 33–37; *Plant.* 126–131.

102. PHILO, *Sp. Leg.* I, 211.

103. PHILO, *Sp. Leg.* II, 162, Cf. J. LAPORTE, *Eucharistia*, pp. 89–90.

104. *Wisdom of Solomon* 18–24; *Letter of Aristeas* 153–159; Josephus, *Ant. Jud.* III, 179–187.

105. PHILO, *Som.* I, 215.

sacrifices and festivities. The soul becomes the altar,¹⁰⁶ and the worshipper becomes the priest of his own sacrifice.¹⁰⁷

The Philonic *eucharistia* expands in the field of the internal life of the soul and is related to the divine generation of virtue. Why, indeed, should we praise God and give thanks to him for his material creation and providence, if we deny him his spiritual work, the production of good deeds and virtue, which is the noblest part of creation? Philo recognizes the major importance of this duty of thanksgiving.¹⁰⁸ He sees in *eucharistia* the direct remedy to the most radical form of sin: pride,¹⁰⁹ when we ascribe to ourselves the work of God through the trivial forgetfulness of unconscious ingratitude, through the negations subsequent to atheism, or through a more sophisticated form of self-appropriation of the gift of God, namely, merit.¹¹⁰ This temptation of pride threatens souls more advanced in virtue and already on the threshold of perfection. It incites them to ascribe to themselves the good deeds which they accomplish and to claim a reward from God instead of giving thanks for them to God as the source of all good things.¹¹¹ The regular practice of thanksgiving prevents this form of pride which is so close to impiety.¹¹²

Philo does not consider the divine Logos only as a creative power and the author of cosmic praise. The divine Logos is the great "butler" of God, and pours as a libation the cup of his own self as a thanksgiving offering to God.¹¹³ The same act of worship is performed on the level of the individual man by the human logos.¹¹⁴ Sometimes the distinction between the divine and the human logos does not appear clearly in Philo. The reason is that the divine Logos as a high-priest is only a divine power, intermediary between man and God, a mediator, and becomes unnecessary when the logos in the individual man has been raised to the place of the divine Logos, i.e., when we deal directly with God.¹¹⁵ Finally, Philo develops a theory of the divine generation of virtue in which he uses the language and secrecy of the mystery religions.¹¹⁶ Virgin Sophia is made pregnant by God, and begets for us the holy product of virtue. Therefore, we must give thanks to God for being the author of virtue in our soul. In this context of thought, *eucharistia* is no longer represented by the Muses, but by Patriarch Juda, whose name means "Acknowledgement": Juda acknowledges the divine impregnation.¹¹⁷ So do the wives of the Patriarchs: Sara, Rebecca, Lea, Cippora, the wife of Moses, and Anna, the mother of Samuel, for they

106. PHILO, *Q.E.* I, 12; *Mos.* II, 108.

107. PHILO, *Q.E.* II, 51; 71.

108. PHILO, *Fug.* 176; *Q.E.* II, 54. Cf. J. LAPORTE, *Eucharistia*, pp. 155-156.

109. PHILO, *Agr.* 169-172.

110. PHILO, *Sacr.* 52-58.

111. PHILO, *Leg. Al.* I, 79-84; *Plant.* 134-138.

112. PHILO, *Sp. Leg.* I, 132.

113. PHILO, *Som.* II, 249.

114. PHILO, *Som.* I, 215.

115. PHILO, *Q.E.* 37-40. Cf. J. LAPORTE, *Eucharistia*, pp. 108-111.

116. PHILO, *Cher.* 43-52; 106.

117. J. LAPORTE, *Eucharistia*, pp. 32-34.

beget by the grace of God.¹¹⁸ Of course, the mystery of the generation of virtue has nothing to do with human affairs, and *eucharistia* is related to the fecundity of divine Sophia.

The high-priest of prayer in Origen

Following the Epistle to the Hebrews¹¹⁹ and Augustine¹²⁰ we usually consider the mediation of Christ as man only. We acknowledge the Incarnation of Christ as a mediation of salvation for the remission of sins. But Christ performs another kind of mediation as the Word, or Logos of God, when we address through him our prayers to the Father. The purpose of this mediation is no longer medicinal, but eucharistic.

In his *Dialogue with Heraclides*,¹²¹ Origen seems to oppose the idea of praying to Christ independently from praying to the Father. He does not thereby deny the deity of the Son. On the contrary, he goes so far in that direction as to compel Heraclides to confess the Father and the Son as two Gods, an unutterable formula. But Origen has his own reasons for insisting on what he regards as the traditional order of prayer: we should pray to the Father through the Son. In order to maintain this tradition and to keep unity in prayer, he invites the bishops present at the conference to abstain from addressing Christ alone in the liturgical prayer. His suggestion was not followed because it is simply right to pray to Christ. The real reason for Origen's emphasis on this order of prayer is that, independently from the Incarnation, he sees the Son of God, or the divine Word, as the mediator of prayer, who himself prays to the Father. Origen specifies that the *Prosphora* should respect the order of prayer.¹²² The *Prosphora* seems to mean the Eucharistic Prayer. Doxologies also reflect the traditional order of prayer, since we learn from Basil that this formula of prayer was given a heterodox interpretation by the Arians who derived from the mediation of the Son and, in some regards, of the Holy Spirit, the idea that the two latter are not God.¹²³

In many other places Origen returns to the idea of the order of prayer, and maintains that we should pray to the Father through the High-Priest, the Word and Son of God.¹²⁴ The most remarkable instance is found in his treatise *On Prayer*:

We may never pray to anything generated — not even to Christ — but only to God and the Father of all, to whom even our Savior himself prayed and teaches us to pray... You should not pray to him who has been set over you as high-priest by the Father, nor to the advocate who has this office from the Father; but you should pray through your high-priest and advocate who can have

118. *Ibid.*, pp. 147–155.

119. Hebrews 5: 1; 2: 17; 9: 12; 12: 24.

120. AUGUSTINE, *Sermon* 293, 7, PL Augustine, vol. V, part I, 1332.

121. ORIGEN, *Dialogue with Heraclides* 2, SCH 67, pp., 56–57; 4, p. 62.

122. *Ibid.* 4, 28, SCH 67, pp. 62–63.

123. Basil of CAESAREA, *On the Holy Spirit* 72–75, SCH 17, pp. 109–113.

124. ORIGEN, *First Princ.* II, 6, SCH 252, pp. 308–324; *Com. on Song* I, 3, ACW pp. 71–72; *Contra Celsum* V, 4, SCH 147, pp. 20–22; VII, 4, SCH 150, pp. 122–124; VIII, 4, *ibid.* pp. 184–186; VIII, 12–13, *ibid.* pp. 200–202; VIII, 67, *ibid.* p. 328.

compassion on your infirmity, being tempted in all things as you are, but, through the gift of the Father, tempted without sin...¹²⁵

We see that the notion of high-priest and advocate suggests to Origen an interpretation in the sense of the Epistle to the Hebrews: a mediation as man. But this mediation as man does not obliterate the eucharistic mediation, which is more properly that of the divine Word or Son. This eucharistic mediation is not the same thing as the mediation of forgiveness, which consists in the sacrifice of the flesh and blood of Christ for the remission of our sins.¹²⁶

Elsewhere, Origen recommends praying to the Son who will present our prayer to the Father:

We worship the one God and his only Son, the Word and Image of God, with prayers and supplications; and we offer our petitions to the God of the universe through his only-begotten Son. To the son we first present them, and beseech him as "the propitiation for our sins" and our high-priest, to offer our desires, and sacrifices, and prayers, to the Most-High.¹²⁷

In this passage, we notice that the human nature of Christ is not an obstacle to his divine mediation, but rather an instrument. It is not simply related to the forgiveness of sin, but it also works as a veil which both hides and gives access to the high-priest himself, the Word of God.¹²⁸ In other words, the human nature of Christ is an adjustment of the divine Word to the weakness of our human capacity, and a way for us to rise in faith to a direct communication with the divine Word.¹²⁹ Christ, the divine Word, shall dwell in us, and we in him.¹³⁰

Then,

those who shall have reached God through the Word who is with God, shall have only one activity, that of contemplating God, in order for all to become completely a son, being transformed through knowing the Father in the same way as the Son only knows the Father.¹³¹

Certainly, Origen owes to Philo his notion of the divine Word as the high-priest of the cosmic praise, and the high-priest of the human praise.¹³² He also owes to Philo his notion of the priesthood of the individual person, which is an individualization of the liturgy of the temple. In this sense, one is priest, altar, and victim when he offers up to God the sacrifice of his thoughts, words, and deeds.¹³³

125. ORIGEN, *On Prayer*, 15-16 GCS II, 333-336; cf. 10, 2, GCS II, p. 320; 33, GCS II, 401-402.

126. ORIGEN, *Contra Celsum* VIII, 12, SCH 150, p. 200.

127. *Ibid.* VIII, 26, SCH 150, p. 232; 66-67, pp. 326-330.

128. ORIGEN, *Hom. on Ex.* ix, 1 GCS VI, p. 235.

129. ORIGEN, *First Princ.* II, 6, SCH 252, pp. 308-324; *Contra Celsum* IV, 14-19, SCH 136, pp. 216-228; 26, pp. 244-246.

130. ORIGEN, *Contra Celsum* VIII, 19-19, SCH 150, pp. 212-216; cf. PHILO, *Q.E.* II, 51.

131. ORIGEN, *Com. on John* I, 91-93, SCH 120, pp. 106-108; *ibid.* II, 28, pp. 224-226; *ibid.* VI, 295-296, SCH 157, pp. 354.

132. ORIGEN, *Contra Celsum* VIII, 67, SCH 150, p. 328.

133. ORIGEN, *Hom. on Lev.* ii, 4, SCH 286, p. 106; *ibid.* iv, 6-10, pp. 180-198; *ibid.* v, 12, pp. 256-266; *Com. on Mat.* GCS XI, com. ser. 18, p. 33; *Contra Celsum* VIII, 4, SCH 150, p. 186.

Like the individual believer of Philo, the Christian celebrates the perpetual feast connected with the daily holocaust and incense offering,¹³⁴ but Origen interprets the incense offering in the sense of Psalm 141 : 2, the offering of prayer and deeds.¹³⁵ He introduces as a model of priestly life the soul of Jesus himself,¹³⁶ and he affirms that we share the priesthood of Christ.¹³⁷

V

THE HIGH-PRIEST, MEDIATOR OF PROPITIATION

Whereas the Philonic *eucharistia* is confined to the idea of praise, thanksgiving, and petition, the Origenian Eucharist, which derives from the Last Supper and follows the Christian tradition, is open also to the idea of forgiveness: the blood of Christ has been poured for the remission of our sins. The Last Supper and the mystery of the passion and resurrection of Christ are interpreted by Origen in the light of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

For Origen, the Pasch is Christ, who has been sacrificed, and Christ is also the lamb who takes away the sin of the world. Christ is the lamb who is taken to the slaughter, and who gives his blood for the remission of our sins. The emphasis of Origen is obviously on the sacrifice of Christ as propitiation. Origen sees in the high-priest of the temple of Jerusalem officiating on Yom-Kippur the prophetic shadow of Christ, the true high-priest who, once for all, entered the heavenly sanctuary and made with his own blood the propitiation for our sins.¹³⁸

Since the Eucharist of Origen includes the notion of the propitiation for our sins, we must briefly explain how, according to Origen, Christ atones for our sins as the high-priest, and how we appropriate his propitiation and the forgiveness of God.

First, commenting on the laws of purity,¹³⁹ Origen affirms that we are all polluted by sin and in need of purification. We bear the sins of others by being an accomplice.¹⁴⁰ We touch impure things when we frequent adulterous people or other kinds of sinners.¹⁴¹ We burn in the fire of our own sins.¹⁴² After death, like the soldiers of Israel (Num. 31 : 21-24), we are still in need of purification,¹⁴³ and the cities of refuge figure a kind of purgatory.¹⁴⁴ A woman after delivery is impure,¹⁴⁵

134. ORIGEN, *Hom. on Num.* xxiii, 1-3, GCS VII, pp. 210-213.

135. ORIGEN, *Hom. on Lev.* ix, 8, GCS VI, pp. 432-434; *Hom. on Num.* xxiii, 3, GCS VII, pp. 213-214.

136. ORIGEN, *Hom. on Lev.* iii, 5 SCH 286, pp. 142-144.

137. ORIGEN, *Hom. on Lev.* vi, SCH 286, pp. 272-292.

138. ORIGEN, *Hom. on Lev.* ii, 4, SCH 286, pp. 106-108; *ibid.* xii, 1-5, GCS VI, pp. 454-462.

139. ORIGEN, *Hom. on Lev.* v, 10, SCH 286, pp. 248-252; *ibid.* viii, 2-3, GCS VI, pp. 394-399; *Hom. on Luke* xiv-xix, SCH 87, pp. 216-278.

140. ORIGEN, *Hom. on Lev.* iii, 103, SCH 286, pp. 120-132.

141. ORIGEN, *Hom. on Lev.* v, 10, SCH 286, pp. 248-252.

142. ORIGEN, *Hom. on Lev.* ix, 7, GCS VI, p. 433; *Hom. on Jer.* xx, 9, SCH 238, pp. 290-298; *First Princ.* II, 10, 4-5, SCH 252, pp. 382-386.

143. ORIGEN, *Hom. on Num.* xxv, 5-6, GCS VII, pp. 239-242.

144. ORIGEN, *Hom. on Num.* xxviii, 2-3, GCS VII, pp. 281-284.

145. ORIGEN, *Hom. on Lev.* xii, 4, GCS VI, pp. 460-462.

and infants are baptized for the purification of the Adamic stain.¹⁴⁶ Even Mary, the mother of Jesus, needed purification.¹⁴⁷ Jesus was not polluted in his soul,¹⁴⁸ and did not enter the world with a “dead soul”,¹⁴⁹ but he was made sin for us, carrying our sins, and tempted as we are although without sin.¹⁵⁰

Origen explains how, in the context of the sacrifice for sin, and particularly of Yom-Kippur, Christ was made propitiation for our sins. More than once Origen combines the two faces of the high-priest: the mediator of prayer and thanksgiving, and the mediator of propitiation for our sins.¹⁵¹

As man, Christ is the high-priest, mediator of propitiation, of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and the priest “according to the order of Melchisedec.”¹⁵² In a “hidden sense”, i.e., prophetically, the high-priest of Yom-Kippur figures Jesus made propitiation for our sins and those of the world.¹⁵³ Christ is the lamb offered for the purification of the people.¹⁵⁴ He is the fat bull offered for the high-priest.¹⁵⁵ Like the Suffering Servant, he is the intercessor by excellence, as the Martyr whose blood redeemed us all.¹⁵⁶ He is the advocate, the victim of propitiation, who removed the decree of our condemnation.¹⁵⁷ Like the priest who ate his portion of the sacrifice for sin, in order to show that the victim was a holy thing offered by a repenting, and therefore, forgiven sinner, Christ devours the sins of the people, and ministers of the Church also eat the sins of those whom they guide in their repentance.¹⁵⁸

Origen explains how we appropriate this propitiation, and obtain forgiveness. It can only be through repentance and the interiorization of the sacrifice for sin. This interiorization first supposes the intervention of Christ as the high-priest of the sacrifice for sin in our soul. Christ makes the atonement on the altar of our soul with his blood,¹⁵⁹ on the propitiatory of our soul, and we eat the flesh of Christ with repentance and affliction.¹⁶⁰ In the moral sense of the sacrifice for sin, we are the priest of our own sacrifice. We are Aaron and his sons. We bring the bull, i.e., our

146. ORIGEN, *Hom. on Lev.* xii, 4, GCS VI, pp. 460–462; *Hom on Luke* xiv, 5, SCH 87, p. 222.

147. ORIGEN, *Hom. on Luke* xiv, 3, SCH 87, p. 218.

148. ORIGEN, *Hom. on Luke* xiv, 3, SCH 87, p. 220.

149. ORIGEN, *Hom. on Lev.* xii, 3, GCS VI, pp. 458–460.

150. ORIGEN, *Hom. on Luke* xix, 1, SCH 87, pp. 272–274; *ibid.* xxviii, 1–3, pp. 352–354; *ibid.* xxix, 1–6, pp. 360–368; *ibid.* xxxiv, 4, pp. 404–406.

151. ORIGEN, *Com. on Song* I, 3, ACW pp. 71–72; *On Prayer* 10, 2, GCS II, pp. 320–321; *Contra Celsum* VIII, 4, SCH 150, p. 186; *ibid.* VIII, 13, p. 202.

152. ORIGEN, *Hom. on Lev.* xii, 4, GCS VI, 460–462.

153. ORIGEN, *Hom. on Lev.* v, 3, SCH 286, pp. 214–218; *ibid.* ix, 9–10, GCS VI, pp. 435–440; *Hom. on Jer.* xii, 13–14, SCH 238, pp. 44–48; *Com. on John* VI, 284–287, SCH 157, pp. 344–348.

154. ORIGEN, *Hom. on Num.* xxiv, 1, GCS, pp. 223–227.

155. ORIGEN, *Hom. on Lev.* i, 2–3, SCH 286, pp. 72–76; *ibid.* ii, 3, pp. 100–106; *Hom. on Jer.* x, 1–3, SCH 232, pp. 396–402.

156. ORIGEN, *Com. on John* I, 230–232, SCH 120, pp. 172–173.

157. ORIGEN, *Hom. on Mat.* GCS XI, com. ser. 92, p. 210.

158. ORIGEN, *Hom. on John* VI, 285, SCH 157, pp. 344–346; *ibid.* VI, 305, p. 364.

159. ORIGEN, *Hom. on Lev.* v, 3, SCH 286, pp. 214–220.

160. ORIGEN, *Hom. on Lev.* ix, 9, GCS VI, pp. 435–438.

flesh kept chaste, to the tent in order to listen to Scripture. We impose the hand on its head through continence and the discipline of life. We slaughter it by the mortification of the flesh which gives life to the spirit.¹⁶¹ Like the high-priest at Yom-Kippur, we also offer the incense, made of our prayer and of the four virtues, and the smoke of this spiritual incense prevents the death of our soul.¹⁶² In a more radical sense, death, accepted as a sacrifice for sin, is a purification from sin, *purgatio peccati*.¹⁶³

In his second homily on Leviticus,¹⁶⁴ Origen describes the seven ways of the remission of sins : baptism, martyrdom, almsgiving, forgiveness of others, conversion of a sinner, abundance of charity, and the hard and painful way of penance, which includes tears, confession, and fasting. It is noteworthy that Origen parallels each one of these seven “remissions” with an aspect of the sacrifice for sin.

We find an echo of these seven remissions, and sometimes a direct relation to the sacrifice for sin, in the practices of repentance which make God propitious, and obtain forgiveness from him. We must break the covenant with the devil by trying to escape him,¹⁶⁵ fight against the flesh, accept affliction, practice penance and fasting, and God then becomes propitious.¹⁶⁶ Restitution and compunction, the requirements of the sacrifice for sin, lead to forgiveness.¹⁶⁷ A broken spirit is a holy thing, and can be compared to the victim of a sacrifice for sin.¹⁶⁸ Affliction, the hard treatment of God as the physician of our souls,¹⁶⁹ even the shame of confession to a small group of brethren,¹⁷⁰ are remedies for our sins. Origen insists on the advantage of confession and on the benefit of the word of God.¹⁷¹

Moreover, good deeds temper the guilt of our sins ; we may then take the chalice of salvation and invoke the name of the Lord with confidence.¹⁷² When our sins are covered by good deeds, God does not impute these sins on us.¹⁷³

Finally, the intercession of the saints is efficient, especially that of martyrs. Origen complains that the absence of persecution is depriving the Church of precious victims of propitiation for sinners.¹⁷⁴ In the ritual or ordination for the priest of the

161. ORIGEN, *Hom. on Lev.* ix, 9, GCS VI, pp. 435-438; *Com. on Rom.* iii, 25-26; J. SCHERER, *Le Commentaire sur Rom.* iii, 5-v, 7 (Cairo, 1951), pp. 156-162.

162. ORIGEN, *Hom. on Lev.* i, 5, SCH 286, pp. 84-86; *Hom. on Lev.* ix, GCS VI, pp. 435-436.

163. ORIGEN, *Hom. on Lev.* ix, 10, GCS VI, p. 438.

164. ORIGEN, *Hom. on Lev.* xiv, 4, GCS VI, pp. 484-485.

165. ORIGEN, *Hom. on Lev.* ii, 4, SCH 286, pp. 108-112.

166. ORIGEN, *Hom. on Luke* xxxv, 9, SCH 87, p. 422.

167. ORIGEN, *Hom. on Lev.* ix, 2, GCS VI, pp. 419-421; *ibid.* x, GCS VI, pp. 440-445; *Hom. on Num.* ix, 3, GCS VII, pp. 57-58; *ibid.* xxiii, 10, GCS VII, pp. 220-221.

168. ORIGEN, *Hom. on Lev.* iv, 2, 5, SCH 286, pp. 164, 179.

169. ORIGEN, *Hom. on Lev.* v, 3, SCH 286, p. 214.

170. ORIGEN, *Hom. on Lev.* vii, 2, SCH 286, pp. 311-312; *Hom. on Num.* ix, 2 GCS VII, pp. 57-58; *Hom. on Jer.* i, 1, SCH 232, p. 197; *ibid.* vi, 2, p. 330; *ibid.* vii, 1, p. 340; *First Princ.* II, 10-11, SCH 252, pp. 382-394.

171. ORIGEN, *Hom. on Num.* xiv, 2, GCS VII, p. 125; *Hom. on Jer.* xx, 8, SCH 238, p. 287.

172. ORIGEN, *Hom. on Lev.* iii, 4, SCH 286, p. 140; *Hom. on Num.* xiv, 2, GCS VII, pp. 123-125.

173. ORIGEN, *Hom. on Jer.* xii, 2, SCH 238, pp. 17-18.

174. ORIGEN, *Com. on Rom.* 4, 9-12, J. SCHERER, pp. 188-189.

temple, in that of Yom-Kippur, and in that of the purification of a leper, Origen finds opportunities to make similar remarks.¹⁷⁵

It would be wrong to reduce all these practices to the different parts or to the general notion of the sacrifice for sin. These practices have their individuality and work by themselves in the spirit of repentance which alone can obtain the remission of sins. However, in Origen's discussion of forgiveness, we must acknowledge the importance of the sacrifice for sin, and particularly that of Yom-Kippur. Thereby we give full justice to Origen's use of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and, consequently, to this part of his interpretation of the Eucharist.

Can we say that Origen is also deeply indebted to Philo in this regard? The parallel between Philo and Origen regarding forgiveness, the methods of forgiveness, and the importance of the notion and practice of the sacrifice for sin, particularly of the ritual performed by the high-priest on Yom-Kippur, for their understanding, is striking. Origen borrows these ideas from Philo, and interprets them in the light of the Christian revelation, particularly the Epistle to the Hebrews.¹⁷⁶

CONCLUSION

We can now gather the results of our analysis, and present a synthesis of the Origenian Eucharist in the light of the Philonic *eucharistia*.

As the representatives of the Christian tradition, Justin, Irenaeus, Hippolytus, Melito, Clement of Alexandria certainly remain basic for the understanding of the Eucharist which Origen knew in the third century. Particularly Clement of Alexandria, because of his knowledge of Philo and of his practice of allegory, deserves more attention than we are allowed to grant him in this paper.¹⁷⁷ L. Lies satisfactorily describes their eucharistic teachings and proves the presence of these teachings in Origen.¹⁷⁸ However, Origen goes far beyond them in his theological developments on the Eucharist, and his developments cannot be substantially explained from what we know of the Christian tradition before him.

My previous research on the *eucharistia* in Philo enabled me to discover in the Eucharist of Origen the presence of the great themes of Philo. For my own investigation of the Eucharist of Origen, I used as tools the Philonic models of

175. ORIGEN, *Hom. on Num.* x, 2, GCS VII, p. 72.

176. ORIGEN, *Hom. on Lev.* vi-ix, GCS VI, pp. 358-440; *Hom. on Num.* vii, GCS VII, pp. 37-48.

177. In addition to the "real presence," like Origen later on, Clement of Alexandria interprets the eucharistic elements and the texts of Scripture which contain eucharistic images through allegory. He gives a long allegorical development on the blood of Christ in the Eucharist as the milk for the little ones, which is the spiritual food of the Logos given from heaven and purifying our souls from passions and sins (*Paedagogus* I, 33-52, SCH 70, pp. 171-204; *Paed.* II, 19-20, SCH 108, pp. 46-48; *ibid.* 32, pp. 70).

Philonic images, common in Origen, appear already in Clement: the manna as the word of God (*Paed.* I, 33-52); the eucharistic symbolism of Rebecca and Isaac (*ibid.* 23, pp. 150-152); the association of psalm singing with the expression of *eucharistia* (*Paed.* II, 42-44, SCH 108, p. 92-96); the worship of the God of the Universe through the High-Priest Logos (*Stromaton* II, 45, SCH 38, p. 70).

178. L. LIES, pp. 64-214.

eucharistia, and I think that I have proved that Origen combined these themes with the data of the Christian tradition, particularly the Epistle to the Hebrews.

The identification of Origen's sources and models of thought makes possible a "genetic" explanation of his eucharistic teaching. But these sources and models must be those of Origen himself. The book of F.M. Young is a very rich contribution to the understanding of the Christian sacrifice, but borrows models from Greek sources which do not correspond to those of Leviticus, which are the models used by both Philo and Origen. There are no sacrifices of "aversion" in Leviticus, and the notion of ransom is related to our salvation from evil. It is not properly a sacrifice, and certainly not a sacrifice offered to the devil. There is no "expiatory" sacrifice properly speaking. What the author interprets as such is punishment, or correction, even self-punishment in order to avoid condemnation at the tribunal of God. But there is a sacrifice for sin. The ritual of propitiation is performed by the priest with the blood of the victim as part of the sacrifice for sin. The propitiation is not a way to placate the wrath of God with the blood of an animal so as to save our life from a vindictive God. The biblical notion of the wrath of God reminds us of the intercession of Aaron with his censer in order to stop the plague sent by God, but this gesture is not a sacrifice properly speaking, and the biblical God is more often a pedagogue than a tyrant. Propitiation is the way God grants his forgiveness to a repenting sinner who has offered a pure sacrifice for sin, confessed his sin, and made reparation for it. There is no reason to assimilate to the sacrificial category actions which are not subjected to the laws on sacrifices in the Bible, even if Origen makes use of a sacrificial vocabulary to explain their religious meaning. Certain forms of sacrifice such as the covenant-sacrifice are present in the historical books, but absent from regular practice. For this reason, they are more a reference than a model for the early theologians of the redemption or of the Eucharist. Similarly, the absence in Origen and other early Christian writers of a type of sacrifice of communion derived from the Dionysiac mysteries and including a crude notion of "theophagy" suffices to prove that the use of Greek models for the investigation of the Christian Eucharist can be misleading. In addition, there is more in the Origenian Eucharist, and already in the Philonic *eucharistia*, than a spiritualization of rituals which would assimilate them to pure prayer in the style of the Neo-platonic sacrifice. The *eucharistia* of Philo and that of Origen include, for Philo, the realism of the sacrifices in the temple, and, for Origen, that of the sacrifice of Christ. The sacrifice of the Christian believers is, indeed, an offering of first-fruits combined with a ritual of communion-sacrifice, but the communion to the Eucharist is always a thanksgiving for the gift of the redemption through Christ.

A synthesis of Origen's teaching on the Eucharist should respect the identity of the great biblical images which he uses for his reflection on the Eucharist, particularly the ritual of sacrifices.

First, the heavenly bread of the word of God seems to be the ultimate reality found under the eucharistic bread and even under the notion of the flesh of Christ. Every reference to the flesh and blood of Christ, as well as to the manna, and to the bread and wine of the mysteries is clearly a reference to the Eucharist. But we seem to

face a contradiction when the implication is that this bread ultimately is the word of God, or simply Scripture. The answer is that the flesh and blood as well as the word of Scripture belong to the same Word of God who spoke through Moses and the prophets in Scripture, and in the flesh through the Incarnation.

The word of God is also the expression of praise and thanksgiving addressed by the creature to the Creator. This *eucharistia* consists of words of praise and thanksgiving for the excellence of material creation and for the working of God in our soul. It also consists of material gifts to God, such as first-fruits and oblations. Through these tokens of a return to God of his gifts, we acknowledge that we received these gifts, and that God is the real owner of all things. Origen and Philo insist on the relevance of offering the first-fruits of the spiritual things: prayer and good deeds.

According to Philo, this offering of praise is presented to God in Jerusalem by the high-priest of the temple; in the universe by the high-priest Logos of God; and in the individual man by the human logos, with or without the mediation of the divine Logos. Similarly Origen understands the divine Logos as a mediator of prayer. This mediator is Christ, the Son or Word of God, through whom we address our prayer to the Father. In this sense, the divine Logos becomes the intermediary of thanksgiving. This aspect of the Eucharist seems to be more basic than the others, bound as it is to the vocation of praise which characterizes the rational nature.

However, the mediation of thanksgiving by the divine Logos does not exhaust the Christological implications of the Origenian Eucharist. The words of Institution at the Last Supper, and the Epistle to the Hebrews, refer to another aspect of Christ: the Logos made flesh in order to be sacrificed as a Paschal lamb for the remission of our sins, and the Logos high-priest, mediator as man, offering his own blood as propitiation.

Philo pointed to the eucharistic character of the Passover, and to the intercession of the high-priest for the remission of the sins of Israel through the blood and the incense of Yom-Kippur. Because of the words of Institution at the Last Supper, Origen integrates propitiation as an essential part of the Eucharist. This addition was prepared, but not made, by Philo who treated the Passover and Yom-Kippur as two independent festivities with their particular praxis and symbolism. Origen's synthesis between Christ as the Paschal lamb on the one hand, and, on the other, as the high-priest offering his own sacrifice, confirms the meaning of the Christian Eucharist as the Memorial of the Redemption.

Origen's inclination to interiorize the notion and praxis of the Eucharist does not mean the negation of the relevance of ritual. The interpretation of the soul as priest and altar; of good deeds, virtues and self as victim; and of prayer as incense-offering, does not mean the reduction of all the biblical images of the Eucharist to a pure act of knowledge or love. For both Philo and Origen, interiorization seems, on the contrary, to imply the use of these rituals and images as concepts loaded with a meaning of their own. It expands their symbolism to the field of the internal life in order to enforce the demands of the law on the things of the soul. Thereby, the

process of interiorization implies a deeper faithfulness to the prescriptions of the law, and represents a continuity with Scripture and the practice of the Church.

We recognized that Origen, as well as Philo, had some difficulty in teaching the "simple" among the faithful. Both of them tried to raise the level of faith to the apprehension of the object of faith, i.e., the things of God. It required from the audience an elevation of the mind, a more contemplative approach, an affinity with spiritual things.

For both Origen and Philo, Scripture and ritual, and, in the case of Origen, Christ incarnate and crucified, and the sacraments of the Church, have their own necessity, but they are not an end in themselves. The heavenly aspect of the mysteries prevails over and absorbs the earthly aspect. According to Origen, Christ as a man is the way to join Christ as the divine Son and Word sitting on the right hand of the Father in heaven.

The heavenly festivities in the Kingdom are a frequent theme in Origen, and evoke the plenitude of the symbolical meaning with which they are invested in the liturgy. There is a heavenly Pasch, a Banquet of wisdom, a bread of angels. As offered to God through the divine Word, our *eucharistia* prepares the recapitulation and the return of all creatures to the Father in the unity of the heavenly and eschatological worship.

According to Origen, although aware of the relevance of these lofty thoughts as belonging to his spiritual aspirations, the average believer preferred to live on a lower level, that of common faith, of popular understanding, focussing on the human aspect of Christ and sacraments. As long as these elements are, at least implicitly, recognized as bearers of a higher reality, they constitute efficient ways to participate in God. But Origen feared that these means might become ends in such a way that, once satisfied with carnal representations, simple Christians might become blind to their spiritual contents.